# Route 666™

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Tony Bedard
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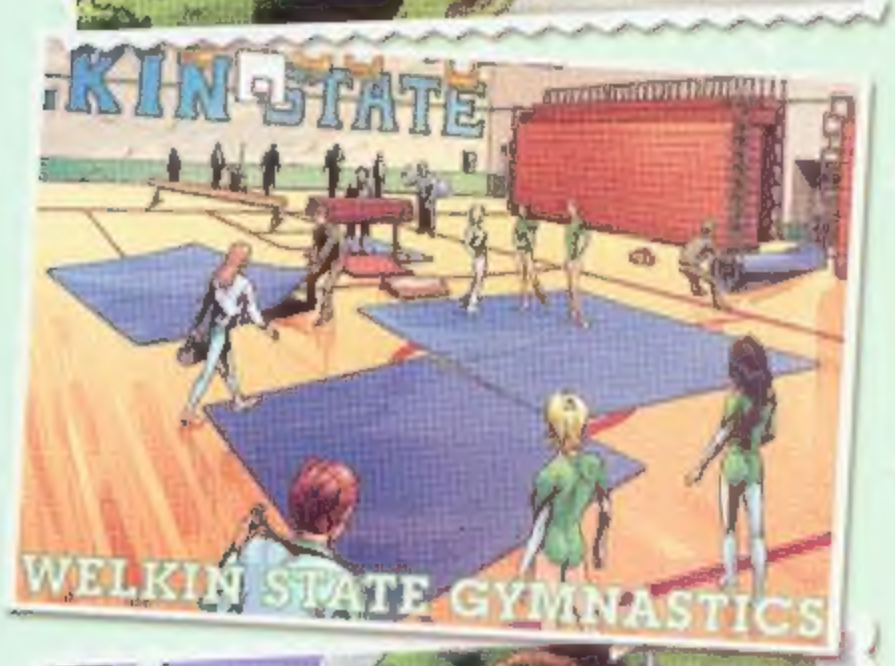
# Greetings From...
# WELKIN STATE UNIVERSITY



Dear Mr. & Mrs. Starkweather,

WSU Campus Administration wishes to update you on the status of your daughter Cassandra as it pertains to the special purview of this office. Pursuant to information in your daughter's medical history, the Dean of Students requires us to periodically review Cassie's adjustment to her classes and campus living.

Our caseworker is pleased to report that Cassie seems perfectly normal and is doing well academically. Her friend and roommate, Helene Mengert, is deemed a positive influence, as is Cassie's involvement in our nationally recognized gymnastics program.

Naturally, our inquiry was discreet, considering your daughter's very vocal mistrust of standard counseling techniques. You may choose not to reveal that we checked up on her at all. Please rest assured that Cassie's future at WSU looks every bit as bright as our prospects against Towson College at next weekend's gymnastics meet.

Sincerely,
The WSU Office of Mental Health

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MARTIN-FARTIN'-
INGLEHART'N?!

NO WAY AM I GOING OUT WITH MARTIN INGLEHART!

"BUT CASSIE! I'M THE HOTTEST GUY ON THE MATH TEAM!"

HE'S ON THE *CHESS* TEAM, HELENE.

IF YOU *MUST* RIDICULE, AT LEAST GET YOUR *FACTS* STRAIGHT.

SO, WHICH IS MORE *PATHETIC*:

MY *D.O.A.* LOVE LIFE?

...OR THE FACT THAT *YOU'VE* RAISED MAKING FUN OF IT TO AN *ART FORM*?

YOUR LOVE LIFE'S NOT DEAD, JUST *DORMANT*, LIKE A *VOLCANO*. YOU'LL SEE...

'CAUSE IT WASN'T MARTIN INGLEHART WHO ASKED ABOUT YOU. IT WAS *BART COOPER*.

BART COOPER! AS *IF!* WHAT *EXACTLY* DID HE SAY?

HE ASKED IF YOUR ANKLE WAS BETTER SINCE THAT FALL AT REGIONALS.

IS THAT *ALL*?

HE ALSO SEEMED KINDA *NERVOUS*, AND HE ASKED IF I THOUGHT TAKING A GIRL TO *GRUMPY'S* WAS COOL, OR IF IT WOULD SEEM LIKE A DATE AT *CHUBBY BURGER*.

CHUBBY BURGER? *THAT* PROVES IT--HE *LOVES* ME...

I REST MY CASE.

NOT *AGAIN*, HELENE!

GET THAT JUNK OFF YOUR TOES IN *FIVE MINUTES*, OR YOU'RE OFF THE TEAM!

COMMONS

SWELNAS

KIN STATE

I *SWEAR* YOU JUST DO IT TO GET MY GOAT.

ARE WE EVER GOING TO *OUTGROW* THIS LITTLE RITUAL, MISS MENGERT?

PROBABLY NOT, COACH...

ALL RIGHT. THE *REST* OF YOU GET WARMED UP. TOWSON COLLEGE OUGHT TO BE HERE IN TWENTY MINUTES.

DON'T FORGET TO LOSE THE *GUM*, LADIES.

BLEACHER HOG

KLIK

KCHUNK WHRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

WHRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
♩...CHUBBY♫ BURGER TASTES ♩SO FINE...MAKES♩ IT FRESH IN HALF ♩THE TIME... ♩♫
BART! HEY, WHERE YOU GOING?
HOW COME?
SOMETHING I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT-- IN PRIVATE.
?
STEP INTO MY OFFICE...
WHRRRCHNK
HURRY UP, CASSIE. I GOTTA WORK ON MY DISMOUNT.
HELLO...?
Uh, MISSION CONTROL TO CASSIE...?
YOU GONNA JUST STAND THERE ALL DAY, OR WHAT?
...O-OKAY...
SO, YOU KNOW HOW YOU WERE ASKING ABOUT CASSIE LAST WEEK?
...YEAH?

"WELL, I THINK SHE MIGHT NOT LAUGH IN YOUR FACE IF YOU ASKED HER *OUT*."

PRETTY *SLOPPY*, MISS STARKWEATHER!

NFF ...SORRY...

GEE, I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE YOU COULD TELL ME *MORE* ABOUT HER LATER...SAY, OVER *PIZZA* AT GRUMPY'S...?

...

LET ME GUESS: BEER FOR *BREAKFAST?*

Um...I'LL JUST PRETEND YOU DIDN'T *SAY* THAT, BART.

CASSIE'S MY FRIEND... MY *BEST* FRIEND...

...AND I REALLY *DO* THINK *YOU TWO* WOULD...YOU KNOW...

*LOOK OUT!*

UNGH

HEY!

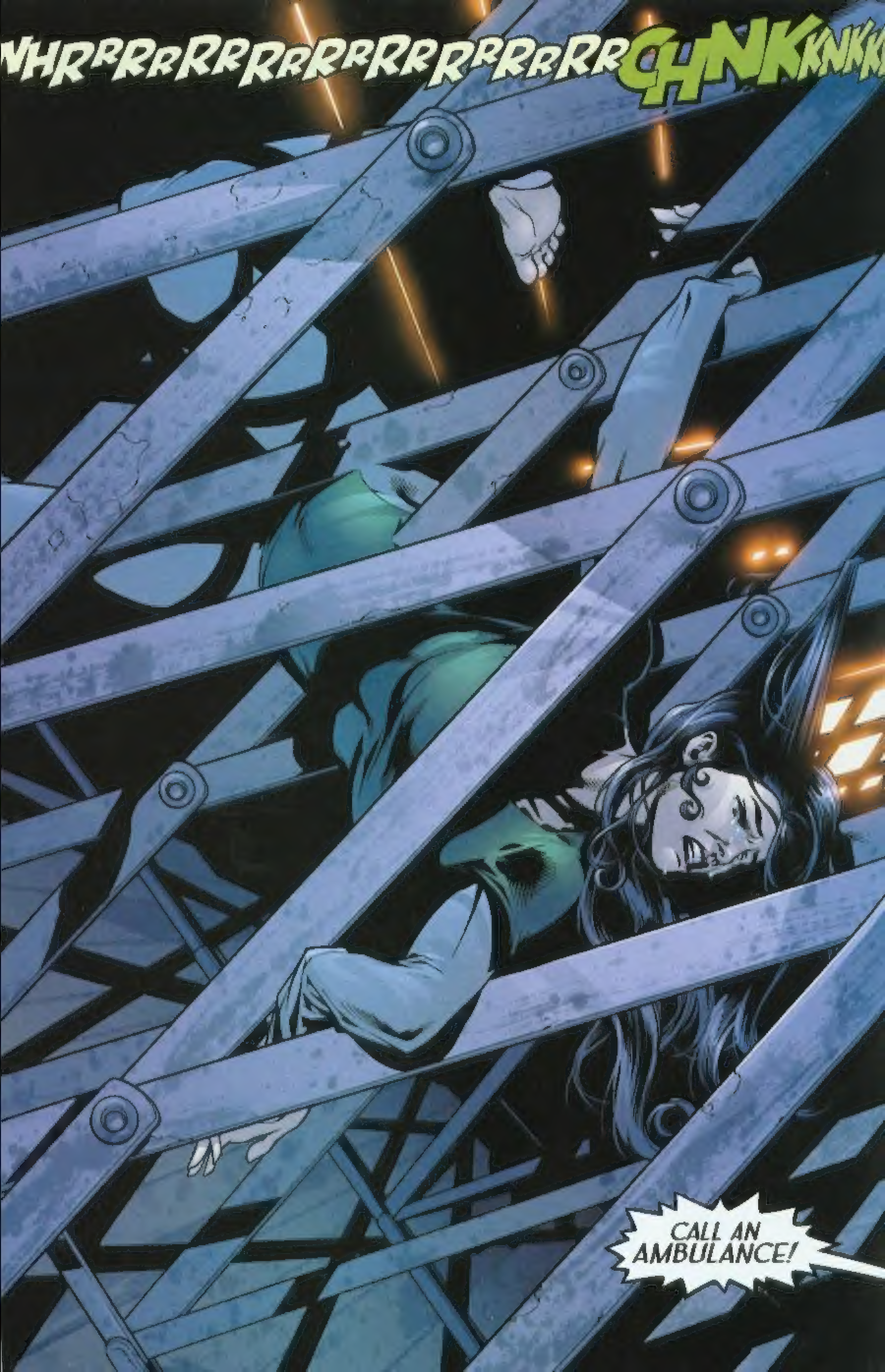
SKZZZ

POP

BLEACHER KING

KCHNKWHRRR

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
WHEW
WHOEVER HIT THAT BUTTON...
TELL 'EM TO TURN IT OFF!
SQUEEEE
KRIK
SNAP
SOMEBODY CUT THE POWER!
POP
SNAP
RRRRRRRRRRRKRRKRRRRKRRKRRRRRRRRRRK


WHRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRCHNKKNKK
CALL AN AMBULANCE!

WILL SHE
WILL SHE MAKE IT?
WE'LL GET HER THERE AS *FAST* AS WE CAN, MAAM!
OH GOD, oh GOD I DID THAT I DID IT
IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT*, CASSIE. SHE'LL PULL THROUGH
HOW CAN YOU *KNOW*?! DON'T YOU *SEE* HER?!
CASSIE THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO IS GO HOME
I'LL FOLLOW THEM TO THE HOSPITAL AND CALL YOU ONCE I *DO* KNOW SOMETHING, OKAY?
KROOM
O OKAY I'LL BE AT MY *PARENTS* HOUSE
I CAN'T FACE OUR DORM ROOM RIGHT NOW
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SHE'S A GONER. FIVE MINUTES, TOPS
OKEY-DOKE. THIS ALLEY LOOKS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO *WAIT* FOR IT

AND AWAY WE GOES

HE CAN FOR A *PICKUP*

STOP YOU'LL ATTRACT THE *COUGARS* SAME FAST NIGHT?

DON'T *REMIND* ME! IF THEY DON'T GET A DECENT POINT GUARD

NOK NOK NOK

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE *DOING?!*

BAM BAM BAM

GET HER TO THE *HOSPITAL!* YOU OUGHTTA *BE* THERE BY NOW!

BANG BANG BANG

LORD *ABOVE!* IF I HADN'T CAUGHT A *GLIMPSE* OF YOU PARKED IN HERE!

TWO FOR ONE?

SURE MAY AS *WELL*

MY BROTHER IN LAW IS A *LAWYER*, AND IF YOU DON'T

URK

WHHH

WHY HASN'T SHE *CALLED?*

I'M SURE IT'S BEEN A VERY HARD DAY FOR COACH HOGAN TOO, SWEETIE

JUST LEAVE IT TO THE *EXPERTS*, DEAR HELENE MIGHT STILL BE IN SURGERY

MAYBE IT'S A *GOOD* SIGN THAT NOBODY'S CALLED YET

DOCTOR KLASKY PRESCRIBED THESE FOR MY *NERVES* MAYBE THEY'LL HELP YOU GET SOME *SLEEP*, CASSIE. WE'LL KNOW WHAT'S WHAT BY MORNING

OKAY MOM THANKS

WHAT ?

YES

GIT HER SKINNY BUTT BACK HERE RAHT NOW!

EH BROKEN GIRL YOU COME PLENTY QUICK!

666

WE'RE ON A DEADLINE

BOSS LIKES TA PLAY WIT A THE FRESH ONES AWHILE MORE HE HAS TA CHUCK EM BACK IN THE BUG JAR!

WHAT I TELL YOU ABOUT KEEPING MEKHTOSHNY MOUTH SHUT?

THIS AIN'T THE MOTHERLAND, PINKY, AN I'LL SAY WHAT I WANT

HOLY GOD, HELENE! WHO ARE THEY?!

SHE IS SEEING US

HAPPEN

LET'S GO, GIRL! WE'LL SORT OUT THE WARM ONE LATER

mhh...

ARGH!

STOP IT!

LET HER GO!

SHWFF

FRAID WE'LL HAVE TO SAVE THE TOUCHY FEELY STUFF FOR NEXT TIME

LATCH YA LATER!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE*

HONEY ?
WHAT HAPPENED?!
TELL ME, CASSIE! WAS SOMEONE IN HERE?! WHO WERE YOU SHOUTING AT?
IT WAS HELENE SHE WAS DEAD, BUT SHE WAS HERE, IN MY ROOM!
AND...AND THEN SOME TORRIBLE THINGS CAME, AND AND THEY TOOK HER AND
Oh
HONEY, IT'S VERY NORMAL TO HAVE A NIGHTMARE AFTER ALL YOU'VE
NO, DAD!
CALL THE HOSPITAL SHE'S DEAD!
I KNOW IT IT'S

MELCHIOR

THE *GOOD* NEWS IS THAT YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE FOR *HELP*

BUT *I* CAN'T HELP *YOU*, MISS STARKWEATHER IF YOU AREN'T W[illegible] TO HELP *YOURSELF*

YES WELL

I UNDERSTAND YOUR RELUCTANCE AFTER ALL HOW CAN WE *RATIONALLY* DISCUSS YOUR *EPISODE* LAST NIGHT WHEN THE WHOLE THING SEEMS SO *IRRATIONAL* TO YOU YES?

WELL YOU MIGHT BE RELIEVED TO FIND THAT THE THINGS YOU *THINK* YOU SAW OFTEN HAVE A HIDDEN MEANING THAT IS NOT QUITE SO *SINISTER*

GHOSTS, FOR EXAMPLE, OFTEN SIGNIFY SOME *PRESSURE* IN YOUR LIFE TO DO SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT TO. AREN'T YOU *GRADUATING* FROM COLLEGE NEXT YEAR?

AND, YOU KNOW, A VISION OF A *ROAD SIGN* IS ALSO INDICATIVE OF AN UPCOMING LIFE CHANGE

ACCORDING TO YOUR MOTHER, YOU SAW A SIGN THAT READ *ROUTE SIX-SIX-SIX*. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY *RELEVANCE* THAT NUMBER MIGHT HAVE IN YOUR LIFE?

OR PERHAPS IT'S JUST THE *REPETITION* THAT IS SIGNIFICANT, *HM?*

DOCTOR MELCHIOR'S *TIME* DOESN'T COME *CHEAP*, CASSIE. THE MAN'S ASKING YOU A QUESTION. IT'S *RUDE* NOT TO ANSWER

OKAY DAD. SINCE THIS IS ALL ABOUT MONEY, I'LL *TALK*

THAT'S *NOT* WHAT I MEANT

I KNOW. IT'S JUST

IT'S HARD ENOUGH ADMITTING THIS STUFF TO *YOU* GUYS, MUCH LESS TO *HIM*

NO OFFENSE, BUT I DON'T LIKE *DOCTORS*.

IT'S NOT *IMPORTANT* IF YOU LIKE ME. I JUST NEED TO KNOW IF I CAN MAKE YOU *WELL*

YOUR MOTHER ALSO MENTIONED *IMAGINARY PLAYMATES*. WHY NOT START THERE?

*HMPH*

*YOU* ASKED FOR IT

WHEN I WAS AROUND FIVE, I STARTED GETTING *VISITORS* THAT NO ONE ELSE COULD SEE OR HEAR

THEY'D STICK AROUND FOR AN AFTERNOON, OR A COUPLE OF DAYS, THEN *MOVE ON*

MOM AND DAD JUST THOUGHT IT WAS A CUTE LITTLE *PHASE* I WAS GOING THROUGH

THEY WOULDN'T HAVE FOUND IT SO CUTE, IF I COULD'VE *DESCRIBED* MY INVISIBLE FRIENDS A LITTLE BETTER

A LOT OF MY FRIENDS HAD SOME PRETTY BIG BOO BOOS, BUT THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND, SO NEITHER DID I

I DIDN'T KNOW WHY THEY CAME TO *ME* IN PARTICULAR, BUT I COULD TELL THAT THEY *FELT* BETTER AROUND ME

THIS WENT ON FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS. IT *STOPPED* BEING CUTE THE NIGHT OF MY GRANDFATHER'S FUNERAL

Y'KNOW HOW SOME PEOPLE HAVE WEIRD NAMES FOR THEIR GRANDPARENTS, LIKE *MEE MAW* AND *PEE PAW*? I USED TO CALL MY GRANDFATHER SOMETHING FUNNY...

?

...

TOO-TOO!

I DECIDED NOT TO HAVE ANY MORE *VISITORS* AFTER ABOUT THE *TENTH* DOCTOR TRIED TO GET INSIDE MY HEAD

SO I *DID* SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THE KIND OF THING MOST EIGHT YEAR OLDS COULDN'T *CONCEIVE* OF.

AFTER THAT, THE GHOSTS *STOPPED* COMING. THAT WAS THIRTEEN YEARS AGO."

I SEE

PLEASE FILL OUT THESE *ADMISSIONS FORMS*, MISTER STARKWEATHER WE SHALL CHECK IN YOUR DAUGHTER *IMMEDIATELY*

I'LL CALL YOU EVERY NIGHT AND WE'LL VISIT EVERY WEEKEND! *PROMISE!*

BYE, MOM

*GUSTAV!* HELP THE YOUNG LADY TO HER ROOM

*BYE!*

RIGHT THIS WAY SWEET LOVE I GIVE YOU TO *HEART* YOUR

THIS HERE'S THE *WOMEN'S* WARD. MEN STAY IN THE EAST WING. YOU AREN'T ALLOWED THERE

SAY, WHY *ARE* YOU HERE, ANYHOW ? CAUSE IF YOU'RE NUTS, IT SURE DOESN'T *SHOW*

THANKS FOR THE EXPERT OPINION. IF YOU PUT THAT IN *WRITING*, CAN I GO HOME?

YOU DON'T THINK I CAN PICK 'EM OUT AFTER FIVE YEARS HERE?

LET'S SEE... *YOU* I HAVE PEGGED FOR ONE OF THEM GALS THAT *STARVES* THEMSELVES TO LOOK PRETTY

OR MAYBE YOU'RE THE TYPE TO SWALLOW A BOTTLE OF SLEEPING PILLS?

OR MAYBE I'M THE TYPE THAT WOULD RATHER EAT *BROKEN GLASS* THAN BE PIGEONHOLED BY A GLORIFIED *TOILET-SCRUBBER*

DIAL IT *BACK*, GIRL

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE FRIENDS IN THIS KIND OF PLACE, BUT YOU WON'T MAKE ANY WITH *THAT* ATTITUDE

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF ANY FURTHER

OH, IT'S NO *TROUBLE*

IT IS FOR *ME*

SUIT YOURSELF. YOU'LL BE SINGIN' A DIFFERENT TUNE BEFORE LONG

SO... UM *HI*

I GUESS WE'LL BE ROOMMATES

MY NAME'S CASSIE. WHAT'S *YOURS?*

HELLO?

YOU *OKAY ?*

NOT UNLESS *CATATONIC* SEEMS OKAY TO YOU

*OH - I*

GOD, I THOUGHT YOU WERE THAT SKEEVY *ORDERLY*.

*GUS?* HE DIDN'T *SAY* OR *DO* ANYTHING.. Y'KNOW ?

NO. HE JUST, I DON'T KNOW. SOMETHING ABOUT HIM MAKES MY *SKIN CRAWL*

WELL, IF *I* COULD GET USED TO HIM SO CAN YOU

I'M *DOCTOR WATERMAN*

SO, um ARE N'T YOU IN VIOLATION OF MELCHIOR'S STRICT *CREEPS-ONLY* POLICY FOR HIS STAFF?

HA. THAT *CATATONIC* CRACK DIDN'T QUALIFY?

JUST KIDDING, SILVIE!

S S E REALLY *LISTENING?*

I THINK SHE KNOWS WHEN I'M THERE AND I THINK SHE LIKES ME BEYOND THAT? I DOUBT IT

TRUST ME SILVIE'S FINE AS MUCH AS SHE *CAN* BE. I'M MORE CONCERNED W TH *YOU*, MISS STARKWEATHER

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO *BE* HERE, BUT IT'S *MY* JOB TO SHOW YOU THAT THIS ISN'T SUCH A HOUSE OF HORRORS AFTER ALL

IT MAY SOUND - PARDON - CRAZY, BUT TRY TO TH NK OF YOUR STAY AS A *VACATION*

THERE ARE PLENTY OF ACTIV TIES AND THERAPIES TO PUT YOU AT EASE AND BRING YOU OUT OF YOUR *SHELL* A LITTLE

JUST KEEP AN OPEN M ND

ONCE I THINK YOU'RE READY, WE'LL SCHEDULE SOME PRIVATE SESSIONS WITH DOCTOR M
THAT'S WHEN YOU'LL REALLY BE ABLE TO FACE YOUR NEUROSES AND RESOLVE THEM
SOMEHOW I DOUBT THAT
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM DOCTOR WATERMAN SOMETHING THAT JUST FEELS WRONG
I MEAN, HAVEN'T YOU EVER MET SOMEONE THAT JUST TURNED YOU OFF RIGHT AWAY?
I KNOW, HE'S A PRETTY COLD FISH, BUT TAKE MY WORD FOR IT DOCTOR MELCHIOR RUNS THE BEST MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM IN WELKIN - MAYBE IN AL EMPYREAN I'VE BEEN WITH HIM TEN YEARS, AND I'VE SEEN HIM WORK WONDERS
ANYWAY, THIS ISN'T ABOUT HIM, IT'S ABOUT YOU, MISS STARKWEATHER YOU ARE THE KEY TO THIS WHOLE PROCESS
YOU'VE MADE PROGRESS IN THESE PAST WEEKS, BUT THE MORE YOU OPEN UP TO US, THE MORE WE CAN HELP
Y KNOW YOU CAN CALL ME CASSIE IF YOU'D LIKE MISS STARKWEATHER SOUNDS SO SERIOUS
WHAT'S YOUR FIRST NAME, DOCTOR WATERMAN?
DOCTOR
DON'T EVEN TRY IT YOU LIKE ME OKAY I CAN TELL

CREAK
SILVIE ?

EEEORRUUAHHH!

WHAK

WHAP

WHAP

ZDRAVSTVUYTE CASSIE YOUR COMRADE HELENE IS NOT VERY HAPPY WITH YOU

SHE RECKONS IT WAS YOU PUT HER IN THE FIX SHE'S IN

NO! YOU'RE LYING!

YEAH SHE FIGURED YOU'D DENY IT S WHY SHE GAVE US ONE DUMB-ASS PASSWORD SO YOU'D KNOW T CAME FROM HER.

HELL'S 666

MARTIN FARTIN ING EHART N' RING A BELL?

EEEEEE!

MISS STARKWEATHER? WHAT'S WRONG?!

CAN'T YOU SEE THEM?!

MISS STARKWEATHER! COME BACK HERE!

IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR WARM ONES TO BE SEEING US, CASSIE

SO THE JACKPOT QUESTION IS HOW COME YOU CAN?

CHANK CHANK

C'MON, C'MON. C'MON!

YOUR COMRADE IS IN TORMENT SHE KNOWS ONLY YOU CAN BE SAVING HER

THE BOSS IS WILLIN TO SWAP YOUR SOUL FOR HERS BUT IT'S A ONE TIME OFFER, GIRL

AND THERE AIN'T BUT ONE WAY YOU CAN GET THERE TA MAKE THE TRADE

HEY IT AIN'T LIKE YOU HAVEN'T TRIED IT BEFORE

HELENE WOULD NEVER WANT THAT!

I DIDN'T KILL HER IT WAS ALL AN ACT!

SNIFF

WHAT THE HOD HELL?

THIS IS NOT ONE OF OURS!

OH GOD!

THAT WAS YOU WASN'T?

ABOUT WHAT'S SHE TALKING?

THAT ACTUALLY HURT!

SOMETHIN LIKE THE LAST TIME SHE PASSED THROUGH ME

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# Greetings From...

# MELCHIOR SANITARIUM

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Starkweather,

Since checking your daughter into our facility, you've both almost certainly worried about the progress of her therapy. I write to inform you that she is well and that I have taken a personal interest in her case.

Her best friend's tragic death would have been a trauma to anyone's psyche. In Cassie's case, the visions of ghosts she reported, and her paranoid delusions concerning a supernatural conspiracy are, in my opinion, her way of processing the shock of losing Helene.

Cassie has begun one-on-one counseling sessions with our founder, Dr. Melchior, and I have every confidence that she will show rapid improvement. Please contact me if you have any questions, and rest assured that I am tracking Cassie's condition around the clock.

Sincerely,

Malachi Waterman, Phd.
Asst. Director
Melchior Sanitarium

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ALL YOU PATIENTS — BACK INSIDE!

SCRATCH MY SCRATCH!

NO WAY I'M GOIN BACK

I WANT OUTS

NURSE CARMICHAEL!

Oh THANK GOD

MORE MEDS! MORE —

I HOPE YOU CALLED DOCTOR MELCHIOR TOO! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE?!

I DON'T KNOW! SOMETHING'S UPSET THEM ALL AT ONCE. EVEN THE CATATONICS HAVE GONE MANIC

AND THEY'RE ALL TRYING TO GET OUT!

C'MON CARMICHAEL THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME EXPLANATION WHERE DID THIS ALL START?

WELL

ACTUALLY IT STARTED BACK THERE! WITH THAT NEW PATIENT

-CASSIE STARKWEATHER

WE [illegible] RIGHT?

[illegible] MAKE FIRST MOVE

NO! YOU'RE NOT TOO TOO MY GRANDFATHER'S *DEAD!* THIS ISN'T HAPPENING. THIS ISN'T *RIGHT!*

*DAMN STRAIGHT, IT AIN'T!*

*FOR WHAT ARE YOU HERE OLD MAN?*

SHOW YOU!

HELP ME!

HYET! HY-AACOW!

HANG ON PINKY WE'RE OUTTA HERE!

MOTHERLOVIN FREAK--!

GRNH

GET *GUS* TO ROUND UP SOME ORDERLIES! WE'LL HAVE TO *TRANK* SOME OF THESE PEOPLE BEFORE THEY HURT THEMS

EH?

WHY'D THEY *STOP* ?

NO, THEY WERE NEVER REALLY *HERE* AND NEITHER ARE YOU, TOO, TOO

JUST ME AND MY SCREWED UP *BRAIN* OR MAYBE IT'S THE *MEDS*

NNN NO

Oh SURE GO AHEAD - SCREW ME UP EVEN *WORSE!*

WHAT IS THIS *REALLY?* MY UNBELIEVABLY CHEESEBALL EXCUSE FOR A *SUBCONSCIOUS* OR SOMETHING?

IS THIS WHERE I FINALLY GO OFF THE DEEP END AND SPEND THE NEXT FORTY YEARS EATING OATMEAL IN A *RUBBER ROOM?*

HELENE IS IN *HEAVEN* NOW! YOU'D *KNOW* THAT IF YOU WERE *REALLY* MY GRANDFATHER!

WHAT SO NOW THE *DEVILS* AFTER ME? SURE WHY *NOT?* NOW CAN YOU *PLEASE* GO AWAY?

SO THAT'S IT. I *HAVE* LOST IT COMPLETELY

FUNNY IT'S NOT AS BAD AS I WAS AFRAID IT WOULD BE

AHHH AT LEAST THINGS CAN'T GET ANY *CRAZIER* THAN THEY ALREADY ARE

CASSIE ?

CASSIE? YOU OKAY?

WHO?

Oh NO YOU DON'T *TELL* ME! LET ME IN CASSIE

I

MISS STARKWEATHER YOUR THERAPY WILL NEVER ADVANCE IF YOU REFUSE TO SPEAK TO ME

YOU HAD ANOTHER *EPISODE* LAST NIGHT THAT MUCH IS UNDENIABLE

BUT I NEED EVERY DETAIL IN ORDER TO INTERPRET ITS SIGNIFICANCE

VERY WELL, IF *YOU* WON'T BREAK THE ICE THEN ALLOW ME TO REPEAT SOME OF WHAT DOCTOR WATERMAN SAYS YOU TOLD *HIM* LAST NIGHT

MELCHIOR

LET'S SEE. YOU CLAIMED YOU WERE ATTACKED BY TWO *BLACK ENTITIES*. ONE SPOKE WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT, THE OTHER APPARENTLY SPOKE RODINAN. YES?

I POINT OUT THESE DETAILS BECAUSE THEY ARE SIGNIFICANT CLUES TO THE *SOURCE* OF YOUR PSYCHOSIS -- AS IS THE *ROAD SIGN* YOU MENTIONED BEFORE.

YOU ALSO THOUGHT YOU SAW YOUR DEAD GRANDFATHER, WHO CLAIMED THAT SOMEONE CALLED THE ADVERSARY WAS PLANNING TO STEAL YOUR

I *TOLD* YOU NOT TO TELL HIM!

DOCTOR WATERMAN ACTED IN THE BEST INTEREST OF YOUR TREATMENT. LET'S STICK TO THE TOPIC, SHALL WE?

NOW, YOUR PARENTS TOLD ME YOU'RE NOT REGULAR CHURCHGOERS. SO WHY THE RELIGIOUS IMAGERY, THE SOUL STEALING? DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE *EXISTENCE* OF THE SOUL?

*SAVE IT!* I'M *NEVER* TALKING TO YOU -- *OR* TO THIS TWO FACED JERK!

CASSIE *PLEASE!*

I *HAD* TO T[illegible] THAT MAN IS YOUR *BEST* HOPE FOR RECOVERY!

[illegible] NOT WITH *HIM*. THERE'S SOMETHING *WRONG* ABOUT DOCTOR MELCHIOR!

STOP LOOKING FOR THE PROBLEM IN *OTHER* PEOPLE

[illegible] MAKES ME WANNA *PUKE*, ALL OF A SUDDEN, OKAY? I THOUGHT HE WAS CREEPY BEFORE, BUT SUDDENLY I CAN'T STAND BEING IN THE SAME *ROOM* WITH HIM. UNDERSTAND?

TRANSFER ME *ANYWHERE* ELSE BUT HERE, AND I *PROMISE* I'LL DO MY PART BUT I'M *NOT* GOING BACK IN THAT OFFICE! I'M *THROUGH* AT THIS PLACE!

OKAY, CASSIE.

YOU WIN. I'LL START MAKING SOME *CALLS*.

Y'KNOW, I MIGHT NOT BE HERE MUCH LONGER. DO I REALLY HAVE TO *TAKE* THESE?

AS LONG AS YOU'RE STILL *HERE*, YOU DO.

SORRY WE HAD TO MOVE YOUR ROOMMATE, STARKWEATHER. NOT THAT SILENT SYLVIE WAS MUCH COMPANY.

WANT ME TO *STOP BY* LATER, IN CASE YOU GET *LONELY*?

GUS!

S'OKAY. NURSE CARMICHAEL ACCORDING TO *TRAILER-PARK WEEKLY*, THE LAZY EYE LOOK IS *IN* THIS SEASON.

HE'LL GET OVER *ME* IN NO TIME AT ALL.

?

SLAM

KCHNK

OKAY LOOK THIS ISN'T *FUNNY* ANYMORE

BETTER *UN*LOCK THAT DOOR RIGHT NOW IF YOUR JOB MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU

YOU GONNA *TATTLE* ON ME TO DOC MELCHIOR? WON'T DO YOU NO GOOD

HECK, *HE'S* THE ONE WHO LET ME PEEK AT YOUR *RECORDS*. BOY ARE *YOU* ONE MESSED-UP LITTLE GIRL!

I SWEAR I'LL GET HIS LICENSE *REVOKED*

*AWW* IS THE TOUGH LITTLE NUT-BUSTER *EMBARRASSED* NOW THAT I KNOW ALL HER *SECRETS*?

Y'KNOW, I WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN SO *NOSY* IF YOU'D JUST BEEN A LITTLE *NICER* TO

WHAT? WHAT IS IT?

LEMME GUESS SAID IN YOUR FOLDER THAT YOU SEE *SCARY STUFF* WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED.

YOU JUST SEE ONE OF YOUR *SPOOKS* AGAIN?

*N-NO* I DIDN'T SEE *ANYTHING!*

IT'S JUST ALL THE *PILLS* GET ME KINDA *JUMPY*

IS THAT SO?

SEE, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE TELLING ME THE *TRUTH*. I THINK YOU SAW SOMETHING AND YOU'RE AFRAID TO *ADMIT* IT.

EVEN TO *YOURSELF*.

'CAUSE IF WHAT YOU SEE IS *REAL*, THEN MAYBE THE WORLD AIN'T FIT TO *LIVE* IN.

AND IF IT'S *NOT* REAL THEN MAYBE THE FUNNY FARM IS RIGHT WHERE YOU *BELONG*.

SO, C'MON STARKWEATHER TELL ME WHAT THOSE BABY BLUES ARE SEEING.

AND DON'T TRY TO SUCKER ME THE WAY YOU DO DOC *WATERMAN*.

MELCHIOR'S GONNA FIX *HIM*, DON'T WORRY.

BUT *YOU*...YOU SHOULD

SHOULD

*THERE!* IT HAPPENED AGAIN JUST NOW. *DIDN'T* IT?

C'MON, FESS UP. YOU'RE *SEEING* SOMETHING WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME AREN'T YOU?

OR MAYBE YOU JUST THINK I LOOK *FUNNY*

OF COURSE NOT

*COURSE* *NOT* 'CAUSE THAT'S NOT A HAPPY SMILE THAT'S A *SCARED* SMILE

DOC MELCHIOR WAS *RIGHT* ABOUT YOU *I* DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE ALL THAT SPECIAL, *BUT*, HE WAS *RIGHT*

SOMEHOW YOU CAN *SEE* THROUGH US SOMEHOW YOU *KNOW*

THAT'S WHY HE *SENT* ME

CAUSE IF YOU *KNOW*, THEN YOU GOTTA *GO*

PITY YOU COULDN'T'VE JUST BEEN A GOOD *PATIENT*

WITH A LITTLE MORE TIME WE MIGHT'VE FOUND OUT HOW COME YOU CAN SEE PAST MY *DAY-FACE*

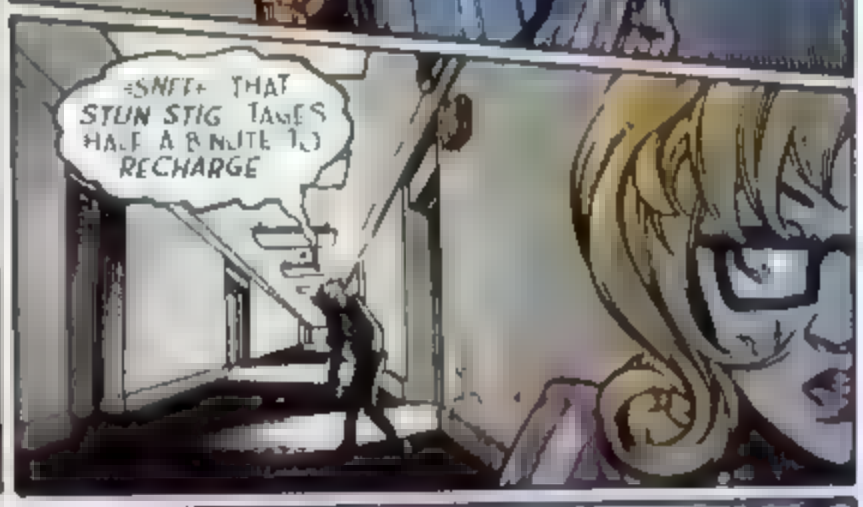
WOULDA BEEN *FUN* -- FINDING OUT WHAT MAKES YOU *TICK*

BUT YOU MUST TAKE ALL THE FUN OUT OF *EVERYTHING*, DON'T YOU?

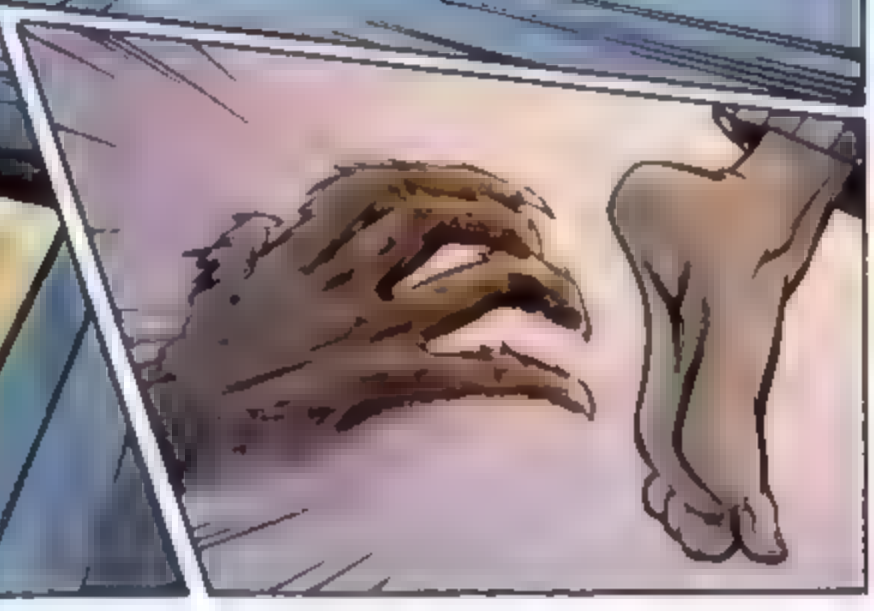
=NNF=

GARRK!

UNK
ENNN
GYAHEEAAHH


-SNFF- THAT STUN STIG TAGES HALF A MINUTE TO RECHARGE

-SNIF- YOU'LL BE BESSING HALF YOUR GUTS BY THEN



¡HUP!
PUMP
SUNOVA -
KRAK
¡HH!
¡HH!
¡HH!
¡HH!

MELCHIOR'S GONNA F X *HIM*, DON'T WORRY

CRUD

CRUD

CRUD!

WASN'T AN END-AROUND!

I JUST WANTED TO HAVE SOME *OPTIONS* READY BEFORE EVEN SUGGESTING IT TO YOU!

SO INSTEAD I GET A CALL FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL SAYING YOU'VE *ALREADY* SET UP HER TRANSFER! VERY DEFTLY HANDLED. WATERMAN

EXAM ROOM

YOU HAVE NO *IDEA* HOW YOU'VE COMPLICATED THINGS FOR ME

I HAD VERY SPECIFIC *PLANS* FOR THAT GIRL NOW *THE BOARD* DEMANDS MORE *DRASTIC* MEASURES

WHAT PLANS?

WHAT *BOARD?!*

SIX YEARS WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER, ALEX AND YOU'VE *NEVER* SHUT ME OUT LIKE THIS. WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO YOU?

AND WHAT ABOUT *YOU?* WHERE IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVITY?

YOU'VE GROWN TOO CLOSE TO THIS ONE. YOUR *INFATUATION* IS AFFECTING YOUR JUDGMENT

OKAY, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I *DO* HAVE PERSONAL FEELINGS FOR HER. ALL THE MORE REASON THAT SHE SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED

TCH— I REALLY HATE TO *DO* THIS, WATERMAN. YOU'VE BEEN VERY USEFUL TO ME

BEEN ?

WHAT, ARE YOU TRYING TO *FIRE* ME ?

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I THINK YOUR TERMINATION IS *DEFINITELY* WARRANTED

I'M GOING TO *MISS* YOU WATERMAN COME GIVE ME A HUG LET US PART AS FRIENDS

A *HUG* ?

*WAIT!* DON'T LET HIM--

CASSIEEEEE-.?!

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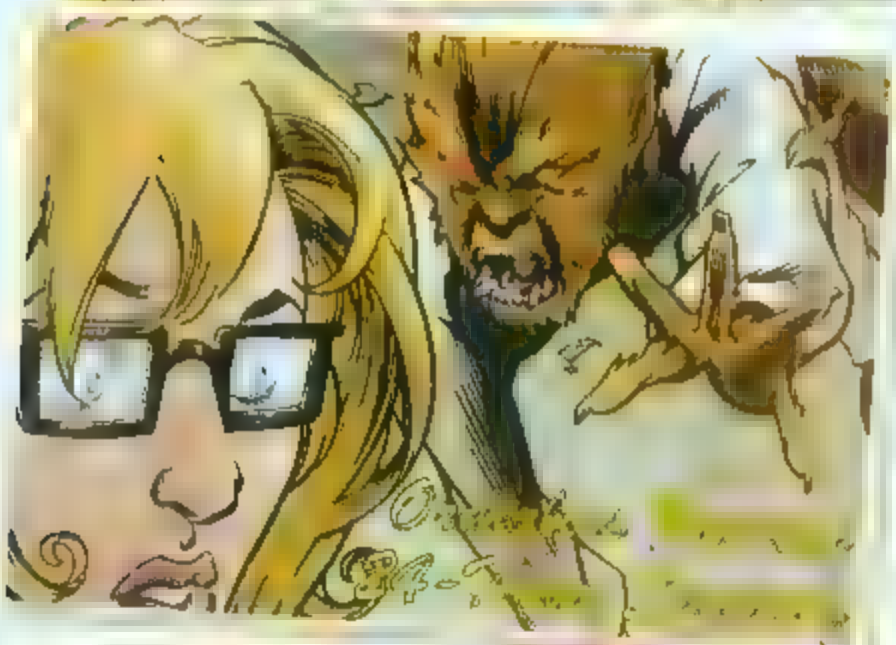
CGE

# Route 666™

Tony Bedard Karl Moline John Dell Nick Bell

# Greetings From... MELCHIOR SANITARIUM



DEAR DR. WATERMAN,

JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR DOING WHAT YOU CAN TO GET ME TRANSFERRED OUT OF HERE. I GOT PRETTY STEAMED AFTER YOU LET MELCHIOR KNOW EVERYTHING I'D TOLD YOU (IN PRIVATE!), BUT I KNOW YOU'RE BASICALLY AN OKAY GUY.

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, I HATE PSYCHIATRISTS, GOING BACK TO WHEN I WAS LITTLE AND USED TO SEE GHOSTS. ALL THE "THERAPY" I GOT JUST MADE ME TRY TO KILL MYSELF. I THOUGHT I'D PUT ALL THAT BEHIND ME, BUT NOW, IT'S ALL HAPPENING AGAIN AND I'M SCARED TO DEATH, BECAUSE EITHER IT'S REAL, OR I REALLY AM CRAZY. TALK ABOUT A NO-WIN CHOICE.

ANYHOW, I SPILLED MY GUTS TO YOU ABOUT HELENE'S GHOST, AND THE "DARK SPIRITS" WHO TOOK HER, AND MY GRANDFATHER'S GHOST BECAUSE I TRUST YOU. I GUESS I STILL DO, EVEN IF YOU DID SNITCH TO DR. MELCHIOR. I WISH I COULD MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THE FEELINGS I GET THAT THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY WRONG WITH MELCHIOR, AND WITH THAT ORDERLY, GUSTAV. THOSE FEELINGS HAVE GOTTEN EVEN STRONGER SINCE TOO-TOO'S GHOST TOUCHED MY HEAD.

I JUST WANT YOU TO WATCH YOURSELF AROUND THOSE TWO, ESPECIALLY MELCHIOR. HE MIGHT GET MAD AT YOU IF HE FINDS OUT YOU'RE TRANSFERRING ME AWAY.

TAKE CARE,

CASSIE

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STOP!

STOP IT!

THOK

WHUNG

GYAAH!

NO, NO DON'T GET UP ON MY ACCOUNT

AH, YOUNG LOVE

PAY ATTENTION MISS STARKWEATHER IN ABOUT THIRTY SECONDS YOU WILL SEE SOMETHING QUITE ***BEAUTIFUL,*** INDEED

PARDON ME ONE MOMENT

...

THERE

THE ***ARRANGEMENTS*** ARE MADE. NOW WE NEED ONLY WAIT FOR THE ***SHOW***

IN THREE TWO ONE

DOCTOR WATERMAN ? CAN YOU *HEAR* ME ?

*Heh.* YOU THINK I AM A MONSTER?

PAL, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE RUNNIN'!
GET A LOAD OF THIS GUY!

SOMEBODY CALL FOR A PICKUP?

WHERE ARE YOU *TAKING* HIM?!

SAME PLACE WE ARE TO BE TAKING YOU

*LIQUIDATE* HER DOCTOR ADVERSARY IS WANTING HER TOO

WHAT THE ADVERSARY *WANTS* IS TO ELIMINATE THE *THREAT* SHE POSES. THAT CONDITION HAS NOW BEEN MET

ONCE I PIN WATERMAN'S *MURDER* ON HER, SHE WILL BE CERTIFIED *CRIMINALLY INSANE* AND REMANDED INDEFINITELY TO *MY* CARE

WHERE I CAN SPEND THE REMAINDER OF HER UNFORTUNATE LIFE DETERMINING *HOW* SHE IS ABLE TO SEE THE DEARLY DEPARTED WHEN THE REST OF THE CATTLE *CANNOT*

IF SHE COOPERATES, WE SHALL HAVE SOME ANSWERS IN SHORT ORDER. BUT I RATHER HOPE SHE *DOESN'T*

AFTER ALL, THE MELCHIOR INSTITUTE IS FULLY EQUIPPED FOR PSYCHOSURGERY, TREPANNING, LOBOTOMIES. *ALL SORTS* OF CRANIAL ADVENTURES

ORDERS ARE ORDERS! ADVERSARY IS WANTING HER NOW! HE SAID NOTHING OF CUTTING HER BRAIN!

HE'LL HAVE HER SOUL SOON ENOUGH

BELIEVE ME HE WILL BE FAR MORE DISPLEASED IF WE DISPATCH THIS GIRL NOW AND MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ HER GREY MATTER

SADDLE UP PINKY THIS ONE AIN'T GETTIN ANY FRESHER

AND DOC? YOU CAN BET THE FARM WE'LL LET THE BOSS KNOW THIS WAS YOUR IDEA

WE ALSO GONNA HAVE TA TELL HIM YOU IGNORED THE DRESS CODE ?

IS GOOD POINT DOCTOR ?

OH FOR PERDITION'S SAKE

I KNEW IT !

THERE ARE YOU SATISFIED?

FIELD OPERATIVES MUST EMBODY LOCAL LEGENDS DURING ANY HOSTILE ACTION

NO EXCEPTIONS!

SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE BUREAUCRAT, CHAIRMAN SUVOROV

RULES EXIST FOR REASON! IGNORE THEM AT YOUR PERIL!

STOOGES THEY'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES

THAT PARTICULAR RULE ONLY APPLIES WHEN WE MIGHT ACCIDENTALLY BE *SEEN* TAKING A LIFE

SHOULD THE WITNESS REPORT THEY SAW A *MOVIE MONSTER* ATTACK SOMEONE, WELL...

...*YOU* KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE WHEN PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE *CRAZY*

DON'T BOTHER GOING FOR THE *STUN ROD* I'LL BE ON YOU BEFORE YOU CAN ACTIVATE IT.

OPERATOR? GET ME THE *POLICE*

WE'VE HAD A *MURDER* HERE AT THE MELCHIOR INSTITUTE. PLEASE SEND SOMEONE RIGHT AWAY.

YES, THE VICTIM IS ONE OF OUR EMPLOYEES

*NAME?* MALACHI WATERMAN

*ADDRESS?* I'M... I'M NOT SURE, BUT HIS *FILE* IS RIGHT

HERE

CHK

KRINK

ARRRHHH!

ah

ah

ah

MURDERING
PIECE OF --
KZZZAK
EVEN IF I CAN'T EVER REPAY YOU, MAYBE I CAN MAKE THEM PAY

HEY, MIGUEL! THE SHERIFF'S SWINGIN' BY TO PICK UP HIS DINNER. YOU START RUNNIN' NOW, Y'JUST MIGHT ESCAPE!
AW, THAT GOOD OL' BOY COULDN'T CATCH A COLD IN A SNOWSTORM.
SUIT YOURSELF, DESPERADO. QUIT BUSTING SUDS LONG ENOUGH TO CLEAR A FEW TABLES?
HEY, MAY! TURN ON THE TEE VEE, WOULDJA? I WANNA CHECK THE SCORE ON THE DUSTERS GAME.
OVERNOR SUM BUSBY PROMISES THAT GOSSMER WILL GET ITS SHARE OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY FUNDS.

MOM? IT'S ME
YEAH YES I'M ALRIGHT, BUT
MOM, LET ME TALK, OKAY?
MIGUEL!
DAD, I TOLD YOU I CAN'T AFFORD IT BESIDES, THE TRUCK RUNS FINE
IF YOU KNOW JUST HOW TO JIGGLE THE STICK-SHIFT
--AND PUMP THE BRAKES, AND THAT THE GAS GAUGE WORKS IN REVERSE
I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW I JUST GOT OFF THE BUS ONCE I THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE
OF COURSE I WANT TO COME HOME! IT'S JUST
SHE COULD KEEP RUNNING FOR HOURS, SON DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT LOOK, I JUST WANT YOU TO BE ABLE TO SELL YOUR TRUCK IF YOU EVER NEED TO
MOM WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SOUND FUNNY
SPECIALS

THE AUTHORITIES TELL US THAT STARKWEATHER IS A JUNIOR AT WELKIN STATE UNIVERSITY AND A STAR ON THE GYMNASTICS TEAM

WHERE A FELLOW GYMNAST DIED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THE COACH DISAPPEARED SOON AFTER. LOCAL POLICE AREN'T SURE YET IF THESE EVENTS ARE LINKED TO THE HOMICIDES AT THE MENTAL HOSPITAL

STARKWEATHER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND VERY DANGEROUS. IF YOU SEE HER, DO NOT APPROACH HER, BUT CONTACT THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY

=KSHHK= SHERIFF, THIS IS DISPATCH.

HEY, CISCO! PICK ME UP SOME FRIED CHICKEN WHILE YOU'RE THERE, OVER? =KSSHK=

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

VMBRRRRR

SKREEEEEEE

BAM

I SAID HOLD IT!

SKREEK

MAY!

CALL *PHIL* AT THE STATION HOUSE AND TELL HIM I JUST SPOTTED THAT ESCAPED *LUNATIC* AND I'M IN *PURSUIT!*

TELL HIM TO ALERT THE HIGHWAY PATROL AND THE N.B.I! *GOT IT?*

Y-YES

*MIGUEL!* GIMME THE KEYS TO YOUR TRUCK *NOW!*

BUT

BUT *NOTHING!* SHE JUST *STOLE* THE *SQUAD CAR!*

OKAY, DAD, BUT YOU *GOTTA* LET *ME* DRIVE!

I *CAN'T,* SON! THIS IS POLICE BUSINESS--

NO CHOICE. THE STICK-SHIFT'S GOTTEN SO HINKY *NOBODY* ELSE COULD GET HER OUT OF THE PARKING LOT!

LIKE IT OR NOT, *I'M* THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE THAT SUCKER RUN!

*NOW* DO YOU SEE WHY I WANTED YOU TO *FIX* THE DAMN THING?!

TUCKER
CITY LIMITS

LISTEN, YOUNG LADY, I KNOW YOU STOLE THE SHERIFF'S CAR! IN A FEW MINUTES EVERY COP IN THE STATE WILL KNOW, TOO!

WHATEVER YOU'RE THINKING YOUR BEST BET IS TO PULL OVER RIGHT NOW AND SURRENDER!

DAD! CAN YOU SHOOT OUT HER TIRES IF WE GET CLOSE ENOUGH?!

THIS IS JUST TO *SCARE* HER, SON. I DON'T WANT TO WRECK THE CRUISER IF I CAN HELP IT.

AND TRY NOT TO *ENJOY* THIS SO MUCH! YOU'RE MAKING ME NERVOUS.

SHE'S *SPEEDIN' UP*, DAD! IT'S NOW OR NEVER. THE ROAD GETS REAL *TWISTY* UP PAST THE CHURCH!

SO... JUST DRIVE STEADY AND BE *READY* IF SHE LOSES CONTROL. *Y'HEAR?*

SON, THIS ISN'T A *TEE-VEE* SHOW! WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT COULD GET HER *KILLED!*

Annnh!

SKREEEE

PULL OVER NOW, GIRL! DON'T MAKE ME USE THIS!

BLAM

PLOOMF

MIGUEL--!

DAD ?

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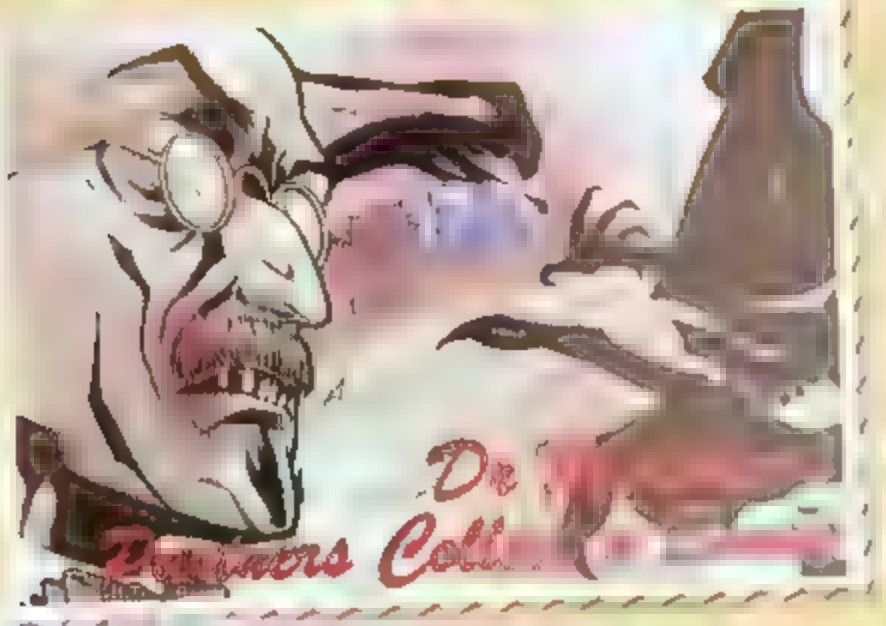


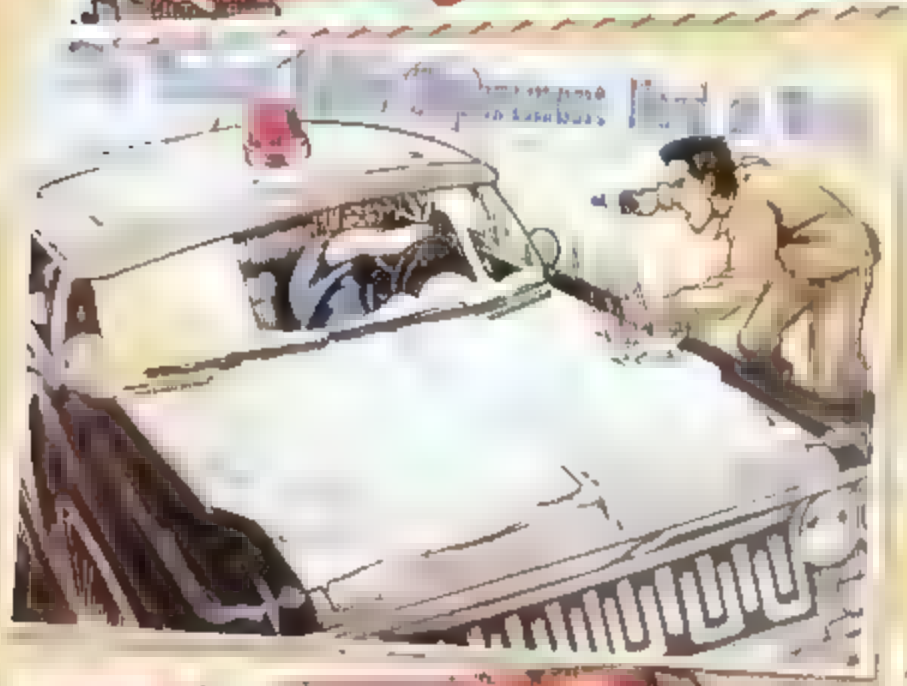

DEAR MOM AND DAD,

CASSE HERE. I KNOW YOU MUST BE WORRIED SICK ABOUT ME. EVERYBODY'S SAYING I'M SOME KIND OF MURDERING MANIAC, BUT IT'S NOT TRUE! UNFORTUNATELY, THE TRUTH IS EVEN WEIRDER, BUT I'LL TELL YOU ANYWAY AND JUST HOPE YOU BELIEVE ME.

I ALREADY TOLD YOU HOW HELENE'S GHOST VISITED ME, AND THAT SOME SCARY "DARK SPIRITS" SHOWED UP AND DRAGGED HER SOUL AWAY TO THE BAD PLACE THEY CAME FROM. THAT'S WHY YOU CHECKED ME INTO MELCHIOR'S ASYLUM.

IT TURNED OUT DR. MELCHIOR WORKED WITH THE DARK SPIRITS. HE AND AT LEAST ONE OF HIS WORKERS WEREN'T EVEN HUMAN. THEY WERE SOME KIND OF MONSTERS THAT COULD PASS FOR HUMAN. AND I'M GETTING THE FEELING THERE'S MORE OUT THERE LIKE HIM. THEY'RE ALL PART OF SOMETHING BIG, SOME SCHEME TO STEAL SOULS AND SEND THEM TO SOME PLACE CALLED PERDITION. THEY'RE DOING THIS FOR SOMEONE OR SOMETHING CALLED THE ADVERSARY. I DON'T WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS ADVERSARY IS, BUT I GUESS I HAVE TO IF I EVER EXPECT TO RESCUE HELENE'S SOUL.

I TRIED TO WARN MELCHIOR'S ASSISTANT, DR WATERMAN, BUT MELCHIOR KILLED HIM. THEN I HAD TO KILL MELCHIOR. STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I SWEAR IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE.

THE ADVERSARY'S PEOPLE (IF YOU CAN CALL THEM THAT) KNOW I'M ON TO THEM. THANKS TO GRANDPA TOO-TOO'S HELP, I CAN SEE THROUGH THEIR HUMAN DISGUISES. SO THEY FRAMED ME FOR EVERYONE'S DEATH AT THE ASYLUM. I'VE BEEN ON THE RUN EVER SINCE. I EVEN HAD TO STEAL A COP CAR IN A LITTLE TOWN IN GOSSAMER CALLED TUCKER. THAT TURNED OUT REAL BAD...

CGE

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MIGUEL ?

ANSWER ME!

ai NO NO

ai Dios I SWORE TO YOUR mah MOTHER I'D TAKE CARE A YOU

ya huh- madre de Dios WHY ? ya huh- ya huh-

WHY NOT ya huh- ME ?!

IT'S *HER* FAULT...CRAZY *RUNAWAY*

?

DAMN

DOESN'T MATTER RATHER USE MY *BARE HANDS* ANYWAY

CHANK CHANK

OOOOHHHHH

I *HEAR* ME, YOU MURDERING LITTLE *NUTJOB*?!

YOU

*KILLED*

MY *SON!*

CHK CHAK

NN NO

I'M *SOOO SORRY* I NEVER

*SAVE IT! NOTHING* YOU *SAY MATTERS ANYMORE!*

PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS ANY HARDER THAN IT ALREADY IS!

PLEASE I JUST WANT THIS TO STOP

YOU KILLED MY SON, MISS STARKWEATHER. THIS IS JUST GETTING STARTED

I

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

EEEEEE

AN AMBULANCE ALREADY ?

EEEEEEEE

WAS THE PATROL CAR'S RADIO STILL ON WHILE YOU WERE RUNNING FROM ME?

PHIL MUST A HEARD THE CRASH AND CALLED THE MEAT WAGON PRONTO

HEY! OVER HERE!

DON'T MOVE! WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

YOU BETTER HAND THAT THING OVER RIGHT NOW, BEFORE YOU MAKE THINGS ANY *WORSE*

HOW MUCH WORSE CAN YOU BE ?

MY SON'S ON THE ROAD! CHECK HIM *FIRST* I THINK HE'S DEAD, BUT IF I'M *WRONG*

IS THERE A *GIRL* OVER THERE WITH YOU?

HOW MUCH *DID* PHIL TELL THEM ?

BOOM CH-CHAK BOOM CH-CHAK BOOM

DAMN!

PLAN B!

WHOA!

*LISTEN* TO ME THOSE *AREN'T* REAL AMBULANCE DRIVERS! THEY'RE THE SAME ONES WHO TOOK MY FRIEND, HELENE, AND THEY'RE HERE TO *KILL* US!

WH- WHATEVER YOU SAY

NO, *REALLY!* THEY'RE A BIGGER THREAT TO YOU THAN *I* AM!

NICE *GOING,* CASSIE

WHAT IN THE ?

WE WOULD'VE LET THE COP LIVE!

MOVE!

KRASH

C'MON!

BOOM

WHAT THE *HELL* WERE *THEY?!*

NOW ARE YOU READY TO *LISTEN?*

I'M *NOT* A MURDERER

THERE WERE THREE DEATHS AT THE ASYLUM I ESCAPED FROM

ONE WAS MURDERED BY MONSTERS JUST LIKE THE ONES *OUTSIDE* THE OTHER TWO WERE MONSTERS THEMSELVES. AND I KILLED THEM IN *SELF-DEFENSE!*

YOU *SAW* THOSE THINGS. JUST NOW YOU *GOTTA* BELIEVE ME--!

I... I'M NOT SURE *WHAT* I SAW OUT THERE

WHAT'S THE *HOLD UP?* WHY AREN'T WE GOING IN AFTER THEM?

ASIDE FROM NOT WANTING TO GET *SHOT?* WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE. LET'S THINK THIS THROUGH

BESIDES, THIS STILL HASN'T GIVEN UP THE GHOST YET SO WE HAVE TO CALL FOR A *PICKUP* ANYWAY

...

LOOK, MISS STARKWEATHER THERE *HAS* TO BE SOME LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR ALL OF THIS

MAYBE THOSE WERE MASKS, OR SOMETHING. MAYBE THESE PEOPLE ARE HOAXING YOU, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOUR, uh, *MENTAL* CONDITION

THINK ABOUT IT. MAKES MORE SENSE THAN *REAL* WOLFMEN, RIGHT?

I SUPPOSE...

MAYBE THEY'RE AFTER YOUR FAMILY'S MONEY? SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

THE IMPORTANT THING IS FOR YOU TO LET *ME* HANDLE IT FROM HERE

*AHH!*

*EASY, NOW!*

OH, GOD, IT'S *YOU* I'M SORRY I'M *SO* SORRY

I NEVER *MEANT* FOR YOU TO -

?

NEKULTURNY IDIOT! YOU ALLOWED BOY'S GHOST TO ESCAPE, YOU ARE TO BE RETRIEVING HIM!

I AIN'T GOIN' NEAR THAT GIRL! LAST TIME SHE TOUCHED ME MAN, YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW WHAT THAT FELT LIKE!

COME ON! SHE'S JUST A GIRL!

ALL RIGHT JACKEG YOU LEAD THE CHARGE!

OKAY OKAY BUT WHY DON'T THEY JUST COME IN AND *GET* US?

ESPECIALLY THE *DARK SPIRITS*.

I DOUBT EVEN THIS *SHOTGUN* COULD DO ANYTHING AGAINST THEM

I'M SURE THEY'D HAVE NO TROUBLE KILLING ME IF THEY *TRIED*

HEY! IS THIS SUPPOSED TO *REASSURE* ME?! I MEAN, YOU'RE TALKING TO *THIN AIR* HERE!

NO

HE'LL JUST GET MAD AT ME

HE *WHO*? IF YOU MEAN *ME*, HELL, I'M *ALREADY* MAD AT YOU SO JUST TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL *ABOUT!*

THE REASON I WAS IN THE ASYLUM THE SAME REASON I THINK THOSE CREEPS WANT ME DEAD, BECAUSE, CAN SEE *GHOSTS*

AND TALK WITH THEM

IT'S YOUR *SON*, SHERIFF HE'S HERE RIGHT NOW, BESIDE ME, AND HE'S STILL IN *DANGER*

ISN'T IT *ENOUGH* THAT HE'S LYING OUT THERE *DEAD*? DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO *MESS* WITH ME LIKE THIS?!

MIGUEL SAYS THEY CALL YOU CISCO

YOU *OVERHEARD* THAT ON THE SQUAD CAR RADIO

MIGUEL SAYS HIS MOM PASSED AWAY *FIVE YEARS AGO*. HE SAYS IT WAS *CANCER*

NOW YOU'RE GUESSING

IT WAS HER *PANCREAS*

YOU EVIL LITTLE BRUJA!

HOW DARE YOU USE MY FAMILY MY POOR DEAD FAMILY AGAINST ME!

HOW DO YOU EVEN DO THAT?!

KRATCH

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND PLEASE LISTEN

SAVE IT YOU'RE UNDER ARREST IN A MINUTE, SO ARE THE TRICK OR TREATERS OUT THERE

THEN YOU CAN ALL EXPLAIN YOUR MIND GAMES IN LOCK UP!

I'LL GET THE *GUN*, YOU GET THE

BOOM

YAAGH!!

AW NO.

UNH

THAT IS IT!

THAT'S THE *LAST* TIME ONE OF YOU *MONKEYS* MAKES US LOOK LIKE *AMATEURS!*

"GASP"

KLIK

BE WITH YOU IN JUST A MOMENT, MISS

PRETTY *USELESS* ONCE IT'S OUT OF BULLETS *ISN'T* IT?

KRUNCH!

GIMME A SECOND

UN-FREAKIN-BELIEVABLE! I TOLD THOSE POOT HEADS NOT TO SELL HER SHORT!
DA IS FINAL UNDERESTIMATION ADVERSARY WILL SEND BOARD OF DIRECTORS AFTER HER NOW
KLIK
OPEN PORTAL, BEASELY WE TAKE THIS ONE AND
SO! NO GHOST OF OLD MAN TO FIGHT YOUR BATTLE THIS TIME?
WORRY NOT
WAIT!

THIS IS WHAT YOU FEARED, BEASLEY?

I AM NOT FEELING ANYTHING

STRANGE

THIS CANNOT BE !

Ohgl h

#gasp#

PINKY?! YOU'RE IN THERE ?

WHORRR

WHAT THE SCREAMIN BLUE HECK WAS THAT?!

Ohhh

YOU ARE DONE FOR, GIRL Y HEAR ME? WE'RE GONNA SIC THE BIG GUNS ON YA NEXT TIME!

NOT SURE BUT I THINK THOSE TWO WERE *HUMAN* ONCE

WHATEVER MY GRANDFATHER *DID* TO ME

TO UNLEASH MY MY GIFT

I THINK IT'S *WORKING*

SO WHAT *NOW?*

I'M GLAD THEY DIDN'T GET YOU. I WISH WE COULD'VE MET SOME *OTHER* WAY
LOOK, I'M GRATEFUL YOU SAVED ME FROM THAT MANIAC, BUT YOU *REALLY* NEED TO STOP PRETENDING MY SON IS HERE LIKE *RIGHT NOW*
HE'S *GONE* NOW. I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE BACK WHEN I WAS LITTLE. I'M PRETTY SURE HE'S GONE TO A *BETTER PLACE*
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MAKE ME FEEL
HE SAID HE FORGIVES YOU FOR THAT *VARGAS* LADY
THERE'S A RAILROAD CROSSING ABOUT A MILE UP THE ROAD. HOP A BOXCAR AND DON'T *EVER* COME BACK HERE
AND DON'T EVER MAKE ME *REGRET* LETTING YOU GO. COMPRENDE?

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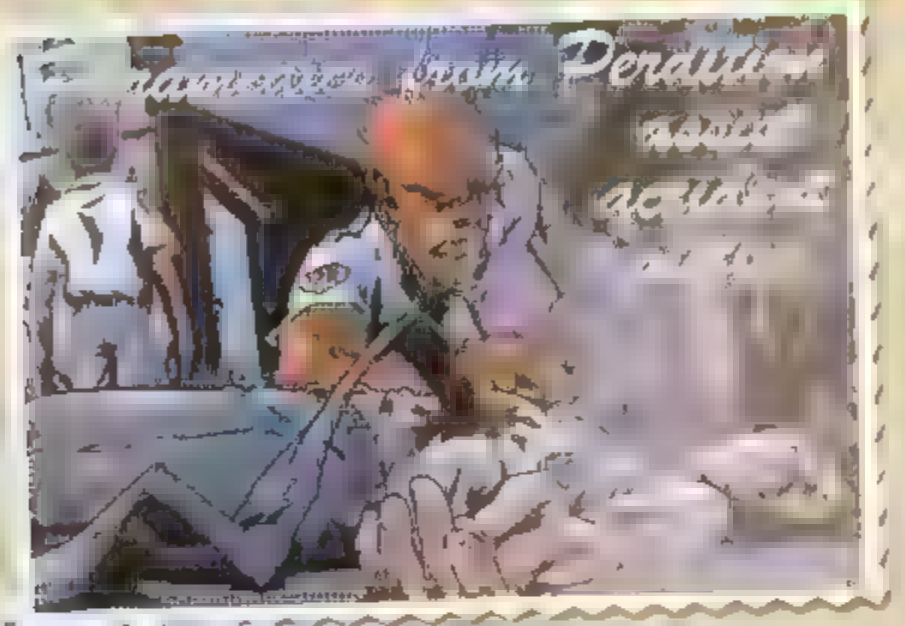
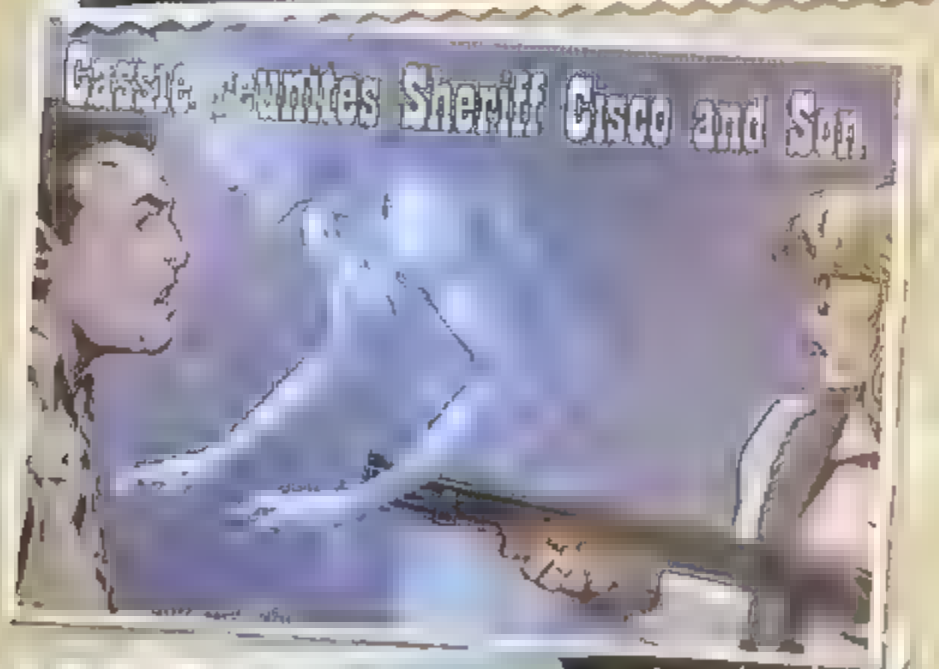
Tony Bedard  Cliff Richards  Roland Paris  Dean White

# Greetings From... TUCKER





Dear Mr & Mrs. Starkweather,

By now you must know of my recent encounter with your daughter. As a father mourning the loss of a child, I think a lot about what you must be going through.

When Cassie arrived in my hometown, Tucker, all I knew about her was what I'd heard on the news: that she'd killed three people escaping a mental hospital, and that police in four states were after her.

She stole my police car, and I gave chase with my son in his pickup. Unfortunately, Miguel was killed in the ensuing crash. And that's when things got really weird.

When I came to, Cassie held me at gunpoint with my own shotgun. An ambulance arrived, and she opened fire, saying the drivers were really monsters. Believe it or not, they actually attacked us. And I swear when they did they looked like wolf-men from the movies.

Cassie also told me that Miguel's ghost was near, and she passed along a few family secrets to prove it. I got to admit: it sent chills down my spine... and it left me feeling that he's gone to a better place.

My point is, I know how much you two must miss your daughter. For what it's worth, I don't think she's the maniac they make her out to be in the papers. I'm hopeful you'll have a chance to see her again. Wish I could say the same for me and Miguel.

Sheriff Francisco Fernandez
Tucker Police Dept.

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CGE.

TIME WAS, YOU USED TO COULD MEET SOME MIGHTY NICE PEOPLE RIDING THE RAILS

FOLKS HAD ***MANNERS*** BACK THEN AND *HOBO* WASN'T SUCH A DIRTY WORD

NOWADAYS YOU CAN'T BE SURE JUST *WHO* YOU'RE DEALING WITH

OR I
T'S EVEN *SAFE*
BUNKIN DOWN
IN A BOXCAR
WITH 'EM

AW, C'MON,
B'RNEY, YOU'RE
SAYIN THE SAME THING
*LAST* TIME WE CAUGHT A
TRAIN TOGETHER AND THAT
WAS NOT ON *TEN*
*YEARS* AGO

THE GOOD
OLE DAYS IS A
*MYTH* THERE'S *ALWAYS*
BEEN BAD FOLKS RUNNIN
AROUND HELL, THAT
*RAILSPLITTER*
FELLA--

IS AN
*AMATEUR*
COMPARED TO
THE KILLERS
THEY'RE BREEDIN
*THESE* DAYS,
SADLY

YOU EVEN
*READ* ONE A THEM
PAPERS I NABBED FOR
US BEFORE YOU PLANTED
YOUR *BACKSIDE*
ON IT?

FIGURED THESE WERE
FOR *INSULATION*,
NOT ENTERTAINMENT
WHY, WHAT WAS IT
YOU SAW?

OH,
OKAY, YEAH,
I *HEARD* OF
THIS ONE

DAILY TELEG
GIRL KILLER STILL A

SHE KILLED SOME FOLKS IN THE LOONY BIN THEN BUSTED OUT RIGHT? YOU FIGURE CRAZY PEOPLE ARE ANYTHING *NEW?*

LOOK AT THE *PICTURE,* SADIE THAT'S THE ANGEL-DAUGHTER EVERYONE *WISHES* FOR

I KEPT THEY SAY SHE DROVE A *FOUNTAIN PEN* THROUGH A GROWN MAN'S *BRAIN*

IF THAT'S THE KIND OF KIDS OUR GREAT NATION *PRODUCES* TODAY THEN WE'RE DOING THE COMMIES JOB *FOR* 'EM

C'MON OLD TIMER YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME *SCARED* OF THAT SWEET THING HITCHIN ALONG WITH US.

HOW 'BOUT IT, MISS. ? *YOU* EVER GET THE URGE TA PICK UP AN *AXE* AN

!

I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE. I JUST NEEDED A RIDE TO HALIFORD
SO, IF YOU DON'T... MIND
I'LL JUST BE... GOING
CHANK CHANK CHANK
YOU HAVE TO UNDO THE LATCH TO OPEN THAT, DEAR, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY WANT TO. NOT WITH US DOING FORTY MILES AN HOUR
YOU THINK THERE'S SOME KINDA REWARD ON HER?
GOTTA BE
Uh, BOYS I THINK YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT TO SIT BACK DOWN
AND WHY'S THAT, OLD MAN?
BECAUSE I MAY NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT BACK IN THE WAR I LEARNED HOW TO USE THIS VERY WELL INDEED

YOU JUST SIT AND WAIT TILL WE HIT A *SLOW STRETCH*, AND THEN THE YOUNG LADY WON'T *WORRY* YOU F NE FOLKS ANYMORE

Ah GOOD! YOU MANAGED NOT TO *BREAK* ANYTHING! EVEN AT A SLOW CLIP, JUMPIN OFF A TRAIN CAN GET PRETTY PICEY!

!

SORRY I DIDN'T JUMP *WITH* YOU, BUT I HAD TO SAY MY *FAREWELLS*.

C'MON, MISS I'VE RIDDEN THIS BRANCH A DOZEN TIMES--WE'RE NOT THAT FAR FROM A TOWN CALLED *STONE RIVER*

BUT

I KNOW. I KNOW

TELL YA WHAT I WON'T BE SCARED OF *YOU*, IF YOU CAN MANAGE NOT TO BE SCARED OF *ME*. DEAL ?

SO, um WHY *AREN'T* YOU SCARED OF ME MISTER BERKELY?

DINER

JUST *BERKELY*, CASSIE YOU CAN FORGET THE *MISTERS*. AND THANKS FOR LUNCH. BY THE WAY, BEEN A WHILE SINCE I ATE THIS GOOD

LISTEN, IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED KICKIN' AROUND ALL THESE YEARS IT'S THAT PEOPLE GET A BAD RAP ALL THE TIME AND THEY DON'T *DESERVE* IT

IT'S LIKE THIS *PIE* YOU DON'T KNOW IF IT'S APPLE, OR CHERRY OR *MINCEMEAT*. T YOU GET DOWN PAST THE *CRUST*

I'M THE SORT TO TRUST MY *OWN* TASTE BUDS RATHER THAN TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S WORD FOR IT

AND I HAVE A *GIFT* FOR IT CASSIE FOR SEEING SOMEONE'S INNER NATURE THEIR *TRUE FACE* Y'UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TELLIN YOU?

YES YES, I DO

I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE. I *RECOGNIZED* YOU THE MINUTE YOU JUMPED IN THAT BOXCAR WITH THE REST OF US. I *ALWAYS* READ THE PAPER SEE. EVEN IF I DON'T ALWAYS TAKE THE NEWS AS GOSPEL

SO AH, THAT TALK ABOUT THE STATE OF EMPYREAN'S *YOUTH*

WAS JUST MY WAY OF GETTIN A *RISE* OUT OF YOU SORRY, BUT, I NEEDED TO CHECK UNDER YOUR *CRUST*, AS IT WERE

AND ?

*ANGEL FOOD* THERE'S NOTHING MINCEMEAT ABOUT YOU

SOMETIMES I'M NOT SO SURE

MAYBE YOU SHOULD TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT *HAPPENED* BACK AT THE BUGHOUSE HOW *DID* THOSE MEN GET KILLED?

THEY *WEREN'T* MEN WELL, *TWO* OF THEM WEREN'T. I MEAN

LOOK, I CAN'T *EXPLAIN* IT WITHOUT IT SOUNDING ALL *CRAZY*

YOU'RE TALKING TO A MAN WHO HASN'T HELD DOWN A STEADY JOB IN TWENTY YEARS. THERE AIN'T NO SHAME IN WHAT *I* THINK OF YOU, SO YOU MAY AS WELL *SPILL*...

THE DOCTOR WHO RAN THE MENTAL HOSPITAL AND ONE OF HIS ORDERLIES WERE SOME KIND OF MONSTERS *PASSING* FOR HUMAN TOLD YOU IT'S CRAZY

GO ON

THEY KILLED A DOCTOR WHO TRIED TO HELP ME. I KILLED THEM IN SELF DEFENSE

I'M STILL NOT SURE WHAT THE COPS MADE OF TWO *MONSTER CORPSES* AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME NO MENTION OF IT ON THE NEWS..

ANY IDEA WHY MONSTERS WOULD RUN A NUTHOUSE?

THEY WERE WORKING WITH THE *THINGS* THAT STOLE MY FRIEND HELENE'S *SOUL* GOD, THIS SOUNDS SO *STUPID* WHEN I PUT IT INTO WORDS --!

QUIT MAKING EXCUSES AND JUST *TELL* ME WE'LL MAKE SENSE OF IT LATER

OKAY OKAY

IT'S LIKE THEY'RE *ORGANIZED*. LIKE IT'S ALL A BIG CONSPIRACY.

THE MONSTERS CALL IN THESE *BLACK GHOSTS* WHEN THEY KILL SOMEONE OR WHEN SOMEONE DIES BY ACCIDENT, LIKE HELENE

IS THIS A *RACIAL* THING?

WHAT? *OH!* NOT THE GHOSTS OF BLACK PEOPLE. I MEAN LIKE ANY BLACK *DARK SPIRITS*.

Superama

THEY'RE. THEY'RE LIKE *SMOKE*. TRY TO GRAB THEM AND YOUR HAND PASSES RIGHT THROUGH. BUT THEY'RE SOLID ENOUGH TO OTHER GHOSTS.

ANYHOW *THEY'RE* THE ONES WHO ACTUALLY CARRY PEOPLE'S SOULS BACK TO THIS *"PERDITION"* PLACE THEY COME FROM

I GUESS IT TAKES LIVE MONSTERS TO DEAL WITH LIVE PEOPLE AND *BAD* GHOSTS TO COLLECT THE GOOD ONES

ONE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A *BOSS*—MY GRANDFATHER CALLED HIM THE *ADVERSARY*—WHO KEEPS THE SOULS PRISONER IN SOMETHING THEY CALLED THE *BUG JAR*

WHATEVER IT IS I THINK HELENE AND DOCTOR WATERMAN ARE IN THERE RIGHT NOW I THINK IT MUST BE LIKE BEING IN *HELL*

STONE RIVER HOSPITAL

Meals Mobile

PERHAPS IT'S *EXACTLY* LIKE HELL, IF YOU TAKE MY MEANING

DO YOU THINK THE ASYLUM WAS THE WHOLE OPERATION, OR MIGHT THERE BE *MORE* OF YOUR MONSTERS OUT THERE?

[illegible] MORE

CASSIE ?

IN THERE?

YES!

AND I SAW ME

BUT WHY WOULD HE BE DOING *CHARITY WORK?* MAKES LESS SENSE THAN RUNNING A SANITARIUM

WHAT IF HE *KILLS* THAT OLD WOMAN? WE HAVE TO *STOP* HIM!

NO HE *WON'T* HURT HER HE DOESN'T *HAVE* TO

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*

STONE RIVER HOSPITAL

YOU SAID THEY HARVEST GHOSTS RIGHT? IF HE WANTED TO *MAKE* GHOSTS, THIS FELLA'D JUST GO AROUND *KILLING* FOLKS. EXCEPT THAT WOULD ATTRACT TOO MUCH *ATTENTION*

BUT DELIVERING FOOD TO OLD PEOPLE, HE CAN *KEEP TABS* ON A LOT OF FOLKS WHO ARE AT DEATH'S DOOR ANYWAY AND *BE THERE* WHEN IT HAPPENS

DON'T GO *IN* THERE!

THERE'S NO MORE BAGS. MUST BE HIS *LAST STOP* TODAY BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF SUPPLIES TO *HIDE* US

STONE RIVER HOSPITAL

*TRUST* ME IF YOU WANT TO STOP BEING A *VICTIM*, THEN GET IN BUT *EASY* LIKE

BECHET? THIS IS ACHAM SORRY, BUT THAT LAST OLD COOT WOULDN'T LET ME GO. THEY'RE ALWAYS SO DESPERATE FOR SOMEONE TO *TALK* TO

TELL ME ABOUT IT! IT'LL JUST MAKE IT SWEETER WHEN HER NUMBER'S UP. DON'T WORRY, ACHAM, WE WON'T START WITHOUT YOU. DRIVE SAFE!

COME ON, WE ONLY HAVE THE CHAPEL BOOKED UNTIL EIGHT THIRTY

LEAST WE MADE *QUOTA* THIS MONTH

ANYONE FOR *PIZZA* AFTERWARDS?

THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE POLICE OFF YOUR BACK IS TO PROVE THE BAD GUYS REALLY EXIST
CLOSED!
GOTTA FIND SOMETHIN' INCRIMINATING IN HERE
BAD FEELING
Meals Mobile
YOU?
WRONG?

I, ah... SORRY FER SHOWIN MYSELF IN LIKE THIS, BUT I WAS FELLIN A BIT PECKISH AND I, uh
WHERE DO YOU KEEP THE SANDWICHES...?
WHAT'D YOU SAY, BERKELY?

THAT'S

THAT'S OUR TICKET TO *EASY STREET!*

WE SEND *HER* DEADSIDE, AND WE'LL BE CHOWIN' ON STEAK AND BABY'S BLOOD FROM NOW ON

SO MUCH FOR PIZZA NIGHT

DAMN STRAIGHT KILL THE GIRL *FIRST*

THEN WE'LL HAVE SOME *FUN* WITH THE HOBO?

GET *BEHIND* ME REAR

WATCH IT THE BUMS GOT A *KNIFE*

SLLSS

BECHET, YOU *GOT* HIM?

BECHET ?

SEMPER FI, FLUFFY!

GUESS MOST OF YOUR KILLS ARE OLD GUMMERS AND SHUT INS

MERCILESS HELL!

AHH!

Heh. YOU'RE *FAST*

LEAST YOU HAVEN'T GONE *COMPLETELY* SOFT

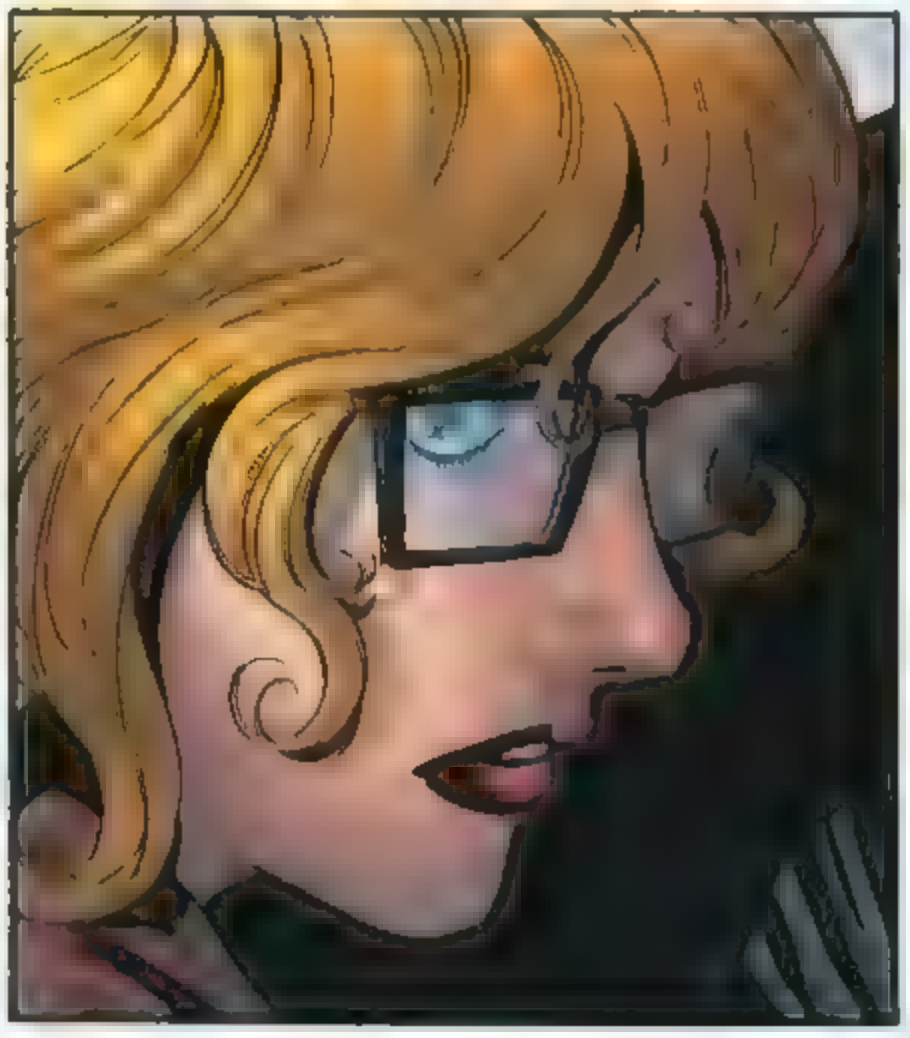
BUT YOU'D *NEVER* VE HACKED IT IN *BOOT CAMP!*

HF
HF
HF

BERKELY ?

AHHR!
AH !

NERVES



STONE RIVER HOSPITAL

WE CAN'T GO THERE IT BELONGS TO *THEM* CAN YOU *SEE* IT?

YEAH

[illegible] *PATTERN* [illegible]

[illegible]

HUSH BERKELY WAIT IN THE VAN - I'LL GET THE *FIRST AID KIT* FROM THE OFFICE

THEY WERE *HUMAN*, BERKELY! I DON'T *GET* IT— THEY WEREN'T MONSTERS ANYMORE!

BUT THE COPS MUST'VE FOUND HUMAN CORPSES! NO WONDER

GOD, BERKELY! WERE YOU! A *SAILOR* OR SOMETHING ?

TATTOOS ?

MANSLAUGHTER

YOU! YOU *MURDERED* SOMEONE ?

IN SELF *DEFENSE*, DEAR

WHO DID YOU ?

MY *FATHER*

DANG HOBOS
AHHH!
BILL ?

# Route 666™

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Tony Bedard Karl Moline John Dell Nick Bell

# Greetings From...

# STONE RIVER

NATIONAL BUREAU of INVESTIGATION
*****URGENT BULLETIN*****

Attention all Field Agents in the states of Gossmer, Millston, Arroba, and Welkin:

Reports from Stone River, Gossmer, indicate that Most Wanted fugitive Cassandra Starkweather has struck again. Three employees of Stone River Hospital were killed last night in the hospital's "MealsMobile" office. Subject Starkweather was witnessed departing the scene.

Starkweather's total known body count now stands at nine. Her murder spree began at a sanitarium in Welkin, where she killed three staffers before escaping. She is also believed responsible for the deaths of two ambulance drivers and the son of the sheriff in Tucker, Gossmer.

Starkweather is believed to have fled Tucker by rail. Agents working the "Railsplitter" slayings are advised to search train routes passing near Stone River.

All agents are reminded that Starkweather is mentally unstable. She claims her victims are supernatural monsters disguised as humans. She also appears to target healthcare workers. She is presumed armed and dangerous.

Special Agent Gunnar Melchior, in charge of the Starkweather case, is en route to Stone River. Please forward all information related to this investigation to him.

************************************

N.B.I. Central Dispatch

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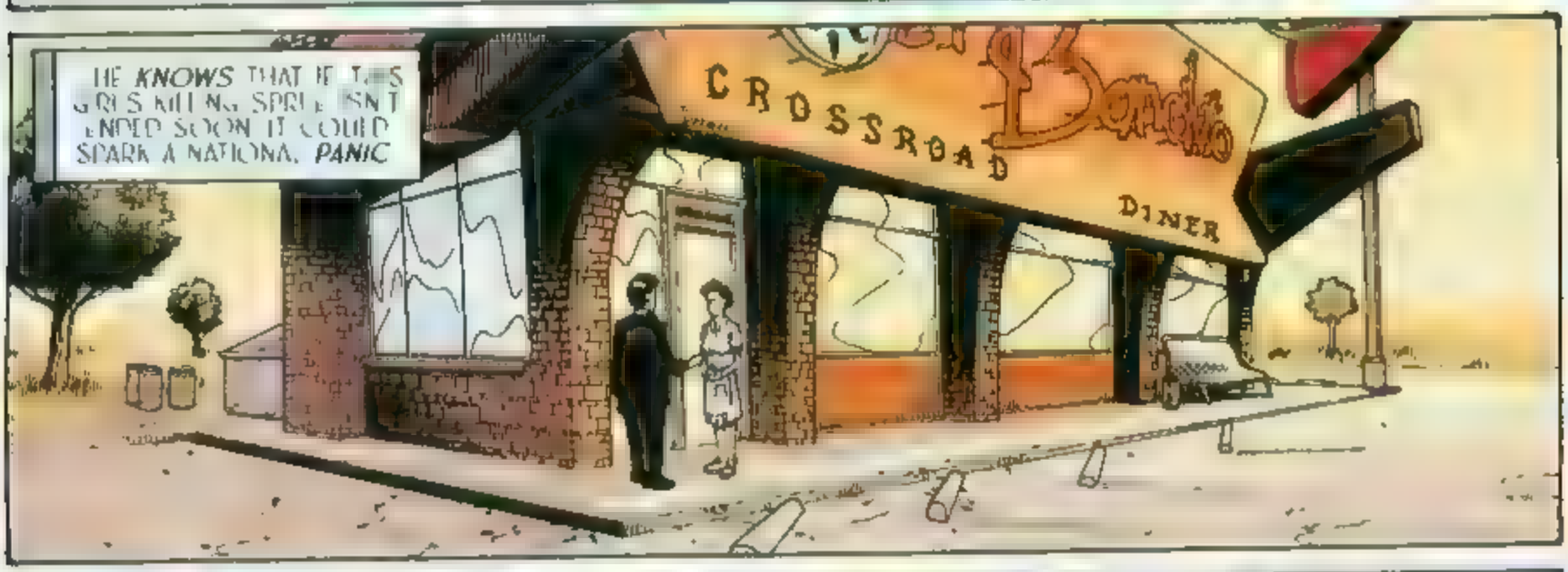
"J. ELGAR PURVIS PUT ME IN CHARGE OF THIS CASE.

IN *THIS* BUSINESS, THAT'S AS GOOD AS *GOD HIMSELF* HANDING YOU THE FLAMING SWORD AND SENDING YOU OUT TO SMITE THE WICKED

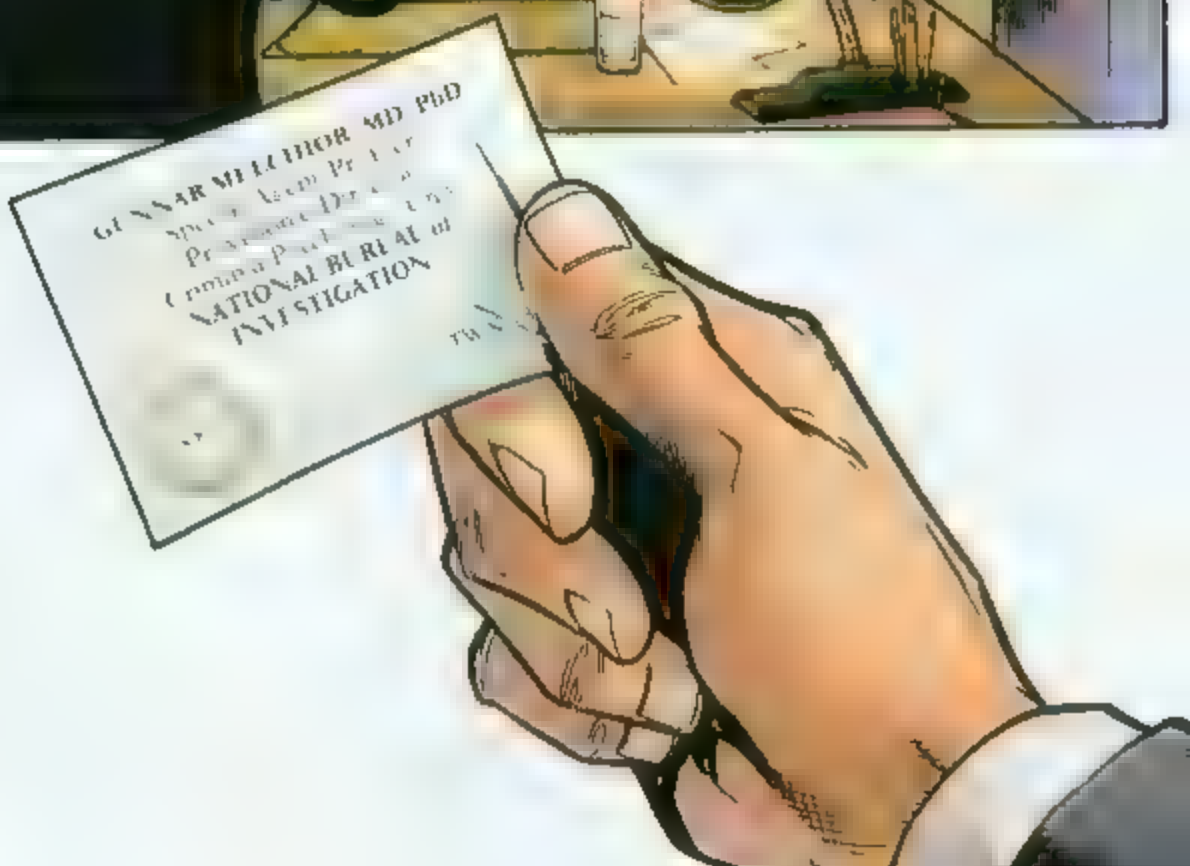
SOME PEOPLE AT HEADQUARTERS *QUESTION* THAT DECISION. THEY THINK I'M *TOO CLOSE* TO THESE CRIMES TO VIEW THEM OBJECTIVELY

I SUPPOSE THEY HAVE A *POINT*

AFTER A.E. MY OWN *FATHER* WAS ONE OF HER FIRST VICTIMS



SO HE PICKED *ME*, BECAUSE I'LL CHASE EVERY *LEAD*, CALL IN EVERY *FAVOR*, AND DESTROY *ANYONE* WHO KEEPS ME FROM *SNARING* THAT LITTLE *LUNATIC*




I'VE FOLLOWED HER TRAIL THROUGH FOUR STATES, AND INTERVIEWED EVERYONE WHO'S CROSSED HER PATH. EVERYONE STILL *ALIVE*, THAT IS.

Meals Mobile

I'M *TELLING* YOU A . . . THIS SO YOU UNDERSTAND KEEP *ANYTHING* FROM ME, OR GRIPE ABOUT JURISDICTION, AND I'LL END UP SMITING *YOU*

NO PROBLEM HECK I'M *GLAD* YOU'RE HERE

FRANKLY THIS SORT OF BLOODBATH IS *WAY* OUT OF MY LEAGUE

LUCKY YOU. IT'S GETTING TO BE *OLD HAT* FOR ME

KLIK

NOVEMBER TWENTIETH TRIPLE HOMICIDE IN A HOSPITAL OUTREACH OFFICE IN STONE RIVER, GOSSMER

WITNESSES SAW THE SUBJECT, *CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER,* DRIVING AWAY IN THE MEALS MOBILE VAN APPROXIMATELY FIVE HOURS AGO

THE VICTIMS, THREE MEN IN THEIR PRIME, WERE ALL *STABBED* TO DEATH. EITHER SHE'S PICKED UP AN *ACCOMPLICE,* OR SHE'S EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN I THOUGHT

WOW YOU REALLY THINK IT WAS THAT GIRL MANIAC FROM THE *NEWS?*

DO YOU HAVE REASON TO *DOUBT* YOUR WITNESSES?

NO! IT'S JUST WELL, WE DON'T GET MANY *CELEBRITIES* OUT THIS WAY

OFFICER, YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT A *MENTAL PATIENT* WITH LESS REGARD FOR TAKING A HUMAN LIFE THAN YOU AND I WOULD HAVE FOR SWATTING A *FLY*

I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE IS *NOTHING* GLAMOROUS ABOUT HER

NOW, MAKE YOURSELF *USEFUL* AND HELP FIND THE MURDER WEAPON IT SHOULD BE SIX TO EIGHT INCHES LONG, EXTREMELY *SHARP* AND *POINTY*

TRY NOT TO GET YOUR OWN FINGERPRINTS ON ANYTHING WHILE YOU'RE AT IT

*AGENT MELCHIOR!* A TIP JUST CAME IN --SOMEONE SPOTTED THE *VAN* PARKED UNDER A BRIDGE TWENTY MILES OUTSIDE OF TOWN!

OFFICER, STAY HERE AND PRESERVE THE CRIME SCENE!

LET'S GO, FINNEY! WE FIND THE *TRUCK*, WE FIND THE *GIRL!*

WE *ARE* GOING TO ARREST HER IF WE FIND HER. *RIGHT*.?

I MEAN, AFTER WHAT SHE DID TO YOUR *DAD*, I'D LOOK THE OTHER WAY IF YOU HAD TO PUT HER DOWN. YOU KNOW..IN *"SELF-DEFENSE*

MY FATHER AND I HAVEN'T BEEN CLOSE IN A *VERY* LONG TIME. THIS *ISN'T* ABOUT REVENGE

THIS IS ABOUT BRINGING HONOR TO THE *BUREAU*, AND ESPECIALLY TO *J. EDGAR PURVIS*

THE OLD MAN PUT HIS *REPUTATION* ON THE LINE -NOT TO MENTION A MAJOR CHUNK OF *FUNDING*- TO START UP THE CRIMINAL PSYCH DIVISION

CATCHING A MASS MURDERER AND FINDING OUT WHAT MAKES HER TICK MIGHT JUST BEGIN TO *PAY BACK* THE CONFIDENCE HE'S SHOWN IN ME

RETURN
POLICY
GOOD
NORMAL?
ENOUGH
WASTE
LAST
NO WAY

WHO BERKELY? TOO TOO HE'S A GODSEND!

HE'S SEEN ME FIGHTING BACK AND AND HE CAN SEE THROUGH THE BULLSHIT JUST LIKE ME!

YES! HE KNEW THE *DELIVERY GUY* AT THAT OLD LADY'S HOUSE WAS REALLY ONE OF THEM

IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT HIM, THEN *SAY* SO! JUST DON'T MAKE ME *DOUBT* EVERYTHING! IT'S TOUGH *ENOUGH* WONDERING IF I'M *CRAZY* HALF THE TIME!

HE'S LIKE ME HE'S GOT THE *GIFT* MAYBE HE DIDN'T HAVE YOU TO *JUMP-START* IT, BUT HE CAN SEE PAST THE *SURFACE* OF A PERSON

HE *KNOWS* WHEN THEY'RE BAD INSIDE HE KNOWS THE *ENEMY*

JUST LIKE ME

SIR I HAVE HER IN MY SIGHTS

SHE SEEMS TO BE TALKING TO HERSELF

WAIT UNTIL I'M IN POSITION

WHAT? WHAT'S WRONG?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? *WAIT--!*

*FREEZE*, STARKWEATHER! DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENTS OR WE'LL *FIRE!*

CHECK THE VAN, FINNEY

YES, SIR

WELL THIS IS ALMOST ANTI-CLIMACTIC

YOU PEOPLE COPS? OR ARE YOU WITH *THEM*?

AGENT MELCHIOR! THERE APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER *BODY* IN THE VAN!

LOOK FOR *IDENTIFICATION!*

AGENT *MELCHIOR* ?

GUNNAR MELCHIOR, N.B.I

*SHOCKING,* ISN'T IT? THAT THE MAN YOU KILLED BACK AT THE SANITARIUM MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE A *SON*

BUT THEN SOCIOPATHS LIKE YOU NEVER CONSIDER YOUR VICTIMS *PEOPLE* WITH *LIVES.* AND *FAMILIES*

Uh, AGENT MELCHIOR? WE HAVE A *PROBLEM*

IT'S NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL. ME AND THIS GENTLEMAN AND THE LITTLE LADY'LL JUST BE LEAVING IN YOUR *CAR* NOW

SEE? NO PROBLEM

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN

*SHOOT*, MELCHIOR! FORGET ABOUT ME. JUST *SHOOT* HIM!

THAT'S ABOUT *ENOUGH* OUT OF YOU

*ah!*

*OKAY!* EASE UP WITH THAT *BLADE!* I'LL

I'LL PLAY IT *YOUR* WAY MISTER BUT *ONLY* IF YOU AGREE TO ONE SMALL *SUBSTITUTION*

I ASKED YOU A *QUESTION*, G MAN!

BERKELY *PLEASE*--! YOU'RE STARTING TO *SCARE* ME!

SORRY, ANGEL BUT I *HAVE* TO MAKE DOUBLE SURE THE AGENT HERE IS *BONA FIDE*

THE WHOLE *POINT* OF WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO DO IS TO *PROVE* TO HIM YOU'RE DOING GOD'S WORK BUT IF HE'S ONE OF THEM *MONSTERS*

STONE
HOSPIT
5 MI

YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T *TELL*...?

WE... WHAT DO *YOU* SEE?

THAT'S JUST *IT!* I CAN'T FIGURE HIM OUT. I MEAN, HIS *DAD* WAS DEFINITELY ONE OF THEM, BUT... I DON'T THINK *HE* IS. HOW IS THAT *POSSIBLE*...?

SO EXACTLY WHAT DID YOU *MEAN* BY CALLING THE LITTLE LADY A *SOCIAL PATH*...?

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE THE ONLY *REAL* MONSTERS IN THE WORLD ARE THE *DICTATORS* AND *SOCIOPATHS*

THERE YOU GO *AGAIN* WITH THAT TEN DOLLAR WORD

IT'S A TERM BEHAVIORAL EXPERTS PREFER TO THE MORE COMMONLY USED "*PSYCHOPATH.*"

IN SHORT, IT MEANS YOUR COMPANION IS PRONE TO ***ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR*** AND PUTS NO VALUE IN THE LIVES OF ***OTHERS.***

S FUNNY I'VE FOUND HER TO BE RATHER ***DELIGHTFUL*** COMPANY

I'M NOT SURE IF THAT SAYS MORE ABOUT ***HER*** OR ***YOU.***

HOLD ON, MISTER HEAD-SHRINKER BEFORE YOU PUT OL' BERKELY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE, FINISH UP YOUR DIAGNOSIS OF MISS CASSIE

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW YET IS SHE A TRUE ***SERIAL MURDERER,*** OR JUST A ***SPREE KILLER?***

THE ***DIFFERENCE*** BEING..?

THE SPREE KILLER EMBARKS ON ONE CONTINUOUS ULTIMATELY ***SELF-DESTRUCTIVE*** STRING OF HOMICIDES.

USUALLY AFTER SOME INCIDENT MAKES THEM '***SNAP.*** SAY, THE DEATH OF A ***FRIEND..?***

THE SERIAL MURDERER, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAKES A LIFESTYLE, A ***CAREER*** OF STALKING VICTIMS. THEY NEVER STOP KILLING UNTIL THEY'RE ***CAUGHT***

SOUNDS FAMILIAR. YOU EVER HEAR OF A FELLA THEY CALL ***RAILSPLITTER?***

OF COURSE *TWENTY-SEVEN* VICTIMS OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS. THE BUREAU WOULD *LOVE* TO NAIL THE CREEP. WHY DO YOU--

WE'RE *HERE*

BERKELY, I . . I DON'T THINK THIS IS SUCH A GOOD *PLAN* ANYMORE

COME ON GIRL, SEE THIS THROUGH WITH ME!

THIS HOSPITAL IS *CRAWLING* WITH MONSTERS! WE *BOTH* SAW THEM WITH OUR OWN EYES

*DID* WE ?

WE'LL FORCE THEM TO *REVEAL* THEMSELVES. THE G-MAN WILL SEE, AND

ANSWER MY *QUESTION*, BERKELY! *DID* YOU ACTUALLY *SEE* ANY MONSTERS HERE EARLIER? OR AT THE OLD LADY'S HOUSE?

...

*NO*, DEAR. ONLY THE ONES IN THE OFFICE - THE ONES I *KILLED*.

THEN, YOU *LIED* TO ME

BECAUSE I *BELIEVE* IN YOU. AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

NOW, I'M GOING TO GO IN THERE AND START *SHOOTING*. SURE WOULD BE LUCKY IF YOU'D MAKE SURE I CHOOSE THE RIGHT *TARGETS*.

HOW MUCH *LONGER* TILL A DOCTOR CAN SEE US? IT IS A *SCHOOL* NIGHT

I *KNOW*, CAROL, AND AGAIN, I'M *SORRY* BUT WE LOST DOCTOR VERPELET IN THAT HORRIBLE BUSINESS ACROSS THE STREET, SO WE'RE A LITTLE *SHORT-HANDED* TONIGHT

DOCTOR MASTLPHAL W... BE WITH YOU JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

IT'S UP TO *YOU*, MISS STARKWEATHER YOU WANT TO PROVE YOU'RE NOT A KILLER STOP THIS *NOW*

JUST SHUT UP WATCH AND *LEARN*

*HOW 'BOUT IT*, CASSIE? WHO GETS IT *FIRST?*

CAROL CLARK? I'M READY TO SEE LITTLE RICKY

BINGO!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

BOOM

BOOM

AW, NO..

EEEEEEE!

Y SEE, G-MAN--

UNF

SHOULDA UNF WAITED FOR HIM TO TRANSFORM !

THUD

uh !

CASSIE! UNF FIND SOME MORE UNH

AW NEVER MIND.

BERKELY, NO-!

WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN ON IN HERE?!

BOOM BOOM

HEY! GET BACK HERE!

YOU'RE BLOWING IT FOR EVERYONE!

BLAM

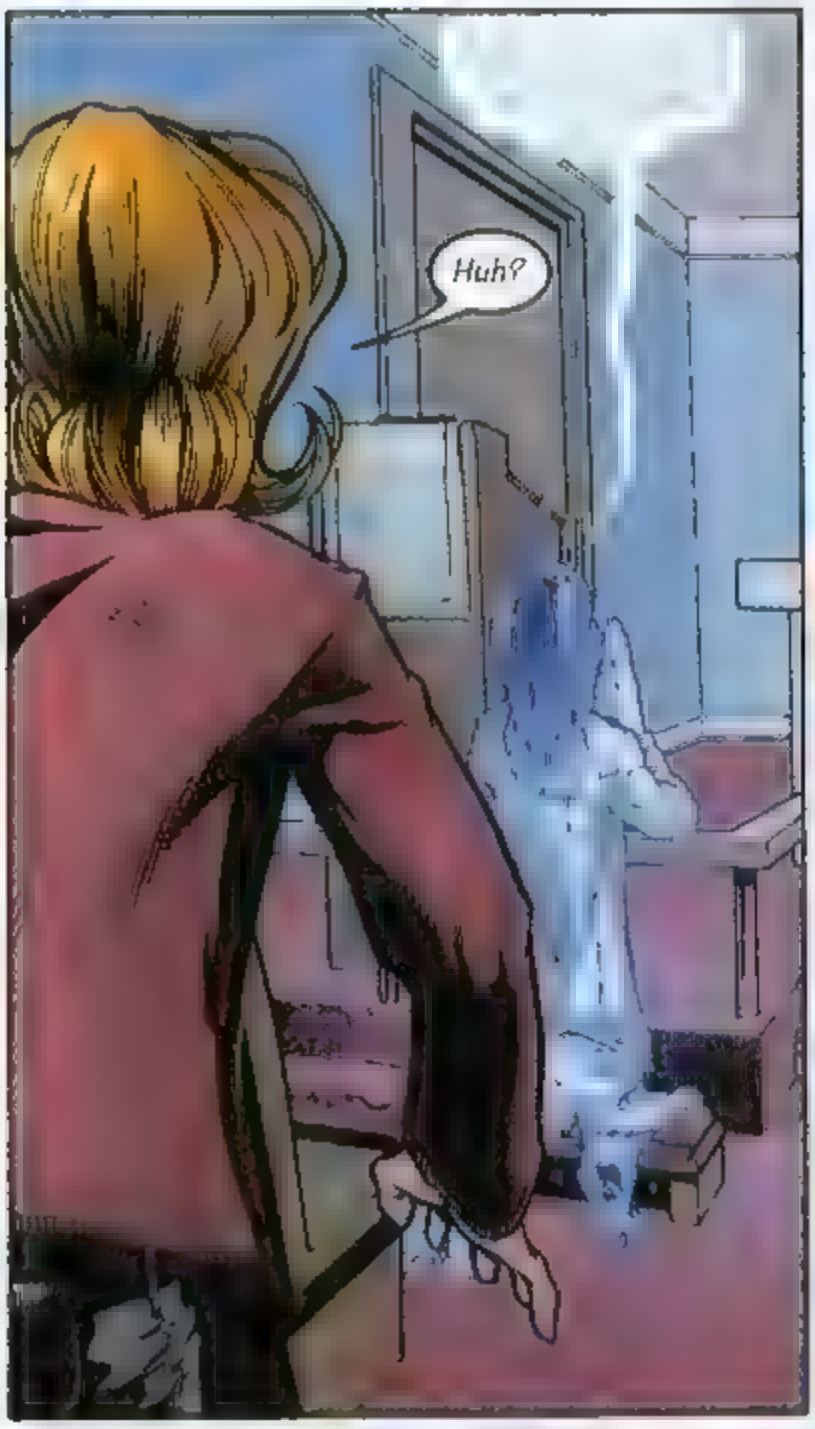
PING

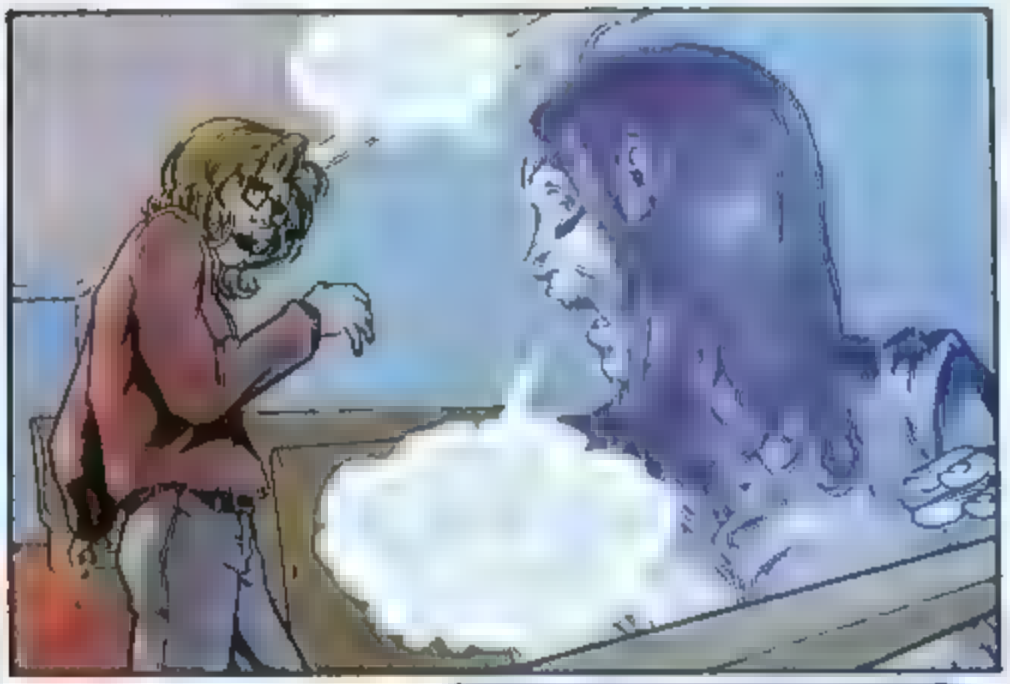
BOOM

CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT SORRY

CASSIE...?!

BACK IN YOUR ROOMS, EVERYONE !
JUST LOCK YOUR DOORS AND REMAIN CALM!
RM 112
CHAPEL
STONE RIVER
HOSP.TAL
?
HELLO ?


Huh?



NO MORE
PLEASE I DON'T
WANT TO
KNOW

FORTY ONE

WHAT ?

THE AGENT SAID I ONLY HAD TWENTY-SEVEN KILLS IT'S FORTY-ONE *MORE* IF YOU COUNT TONIGHT

I WANT YOU TO *KNOW*, CASSIE. IT'S IMPORTANT YOU KNOW *ALL* OF IT NOW

WHERE'D SHE GO ?

I *ALWAYS* HAD THESE FEELINGS. THESE *URGES*. IT'S WHY I *ENLISTED* IN THE FIRST PLACE--

--FIGURED THE SERVICE WAS *MADE* FOR GUYS LIKE ME

SURE ENOUGH, I MADE A WHIZ-BANG MARINE. BUT WHEN I CAME HOME FROM THE WAR, I DIDN'T *FIT IN*

AND WHEN I COULDN'T HOLD IT IN ANY MORE, MY DADDY BECAME MY FIRST PEACETIME KILL

I WONDERED EVER SINCE WHY I WAS *BORN* THIS WAY. WHAT *PURPOSE* WOULD THE GOOD LORD HAVE, PUTTING SUCH THINGS IN MY HEAD?

AND THEN I MEET *YOU*, AND SUDDENLY I *KNOW* MY PURPOSE. YOU CAN SEE THE *REAL* MONSTERS OUT THERE. BUT YOU LOOK AT *ME*, AND YOU *DON'T* SEE A BEAST

YOU KNOW *WHY*, DON'T YOU? CAUSE WE'RE THE *SAME*, YOU AND I. WE WEREN'T MEANT TO FIT IN. WE WERE MEANT FOR SOMETHING GREATER

WE'RE *HOLY SOLDIERS*, YOU AND I

YOU'VE GOT THE GRACE TO *SPOT* THEM. I'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO *END* THEM. WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR EACH OTHER ALL OUR LIVES AND NEVER KNEW IT

YOU'RE

YOU'RE *RIGHT*

NOW I HAVE A CONFESSION FOR *YOU*, BERKELY

I WAS *WRONG* EARLIER THAT NBI AGENT? HE *WAS* ONE OF THEM. I WASN'T SURE UNTIL HE *RAN*

THANKS. YOU CALLED FOR *BACKUP*?

YUP. SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM *AGENTS* YOU HAD WITH YOU BEFORE

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

-BLAM BLAM -BLAM

WE'RE THE *SAME*, YOU AND I. WE WEREN'T *MEANT* TO FIT IN. WE WERE MEANT FOR SOMETHING *GREATER*

WHO *IS* THIS GUY?

I WASN'T *SURE*, FOR A WHILE THERE.

I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE HE WAS THE *MOTIVATOR* BEHIND HER KILLING SPREE, BUT *NO*.

HE WAS JUST ANOTHER ONE OF HER *VICTIMS*.

CGE

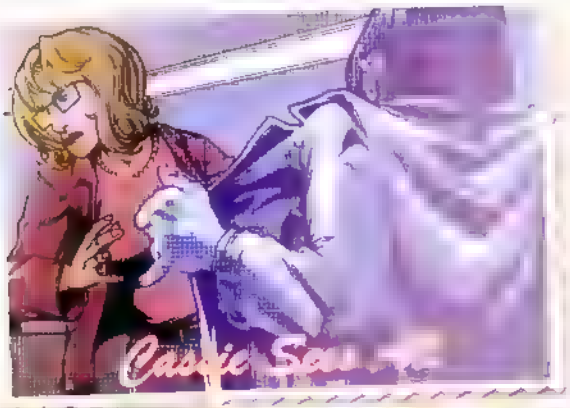
7
JAN

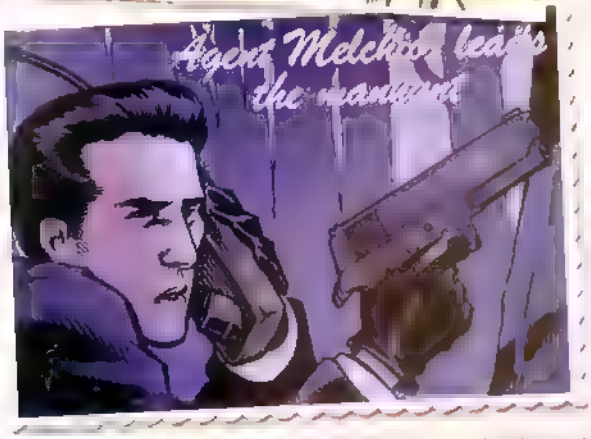
$2.95
$4.75 CAN

# Route 666

Tony Bedard | Karl Moline | John Dell | Nick Bell

# Greetings From... Harlequin HEALTHCARE






Inter-office Memo

To: Board of Directors

Cc: The Adversary

From: Chairwoman Byleth

Re: Cassandra Starkweather

Date: December 18

At the command of his Infernal Eminence, each of you must report immediately for an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors (Northern Bloc). Recent failures by our local operatives to capture Cassandra Starkweather of Plainsville, Welkin necessitate that the Board handles the matter personally.

I remind you that Starkweather can see past the day-face of any Perdition operative. She might, therefore, expose the scope and nature of our infiltration in human society, and our global soul-harvesting operation. The true extent of Starkweather's psychic abilities has yet to be measured. She has directly assaulted our couriers, the Dark Spirits, heretofore considered beyond any harm from the living. Starkweather has also fended off three attempts by lesser Perdition operatives to kill or capture her. Her abilities grow with each new encounter.

Law enforcement authorities in Empyrean currently seek Starkweather on murder charges. Agent Gunnar Melchior of the National Bureau of Investigation leads the dragnet. I will advise you of our plans to co-opt his efforts upon your arrival at corporate headquarters.

Yours in the Brimstone Bond,

Byleth

00711

8 00155 98137 3

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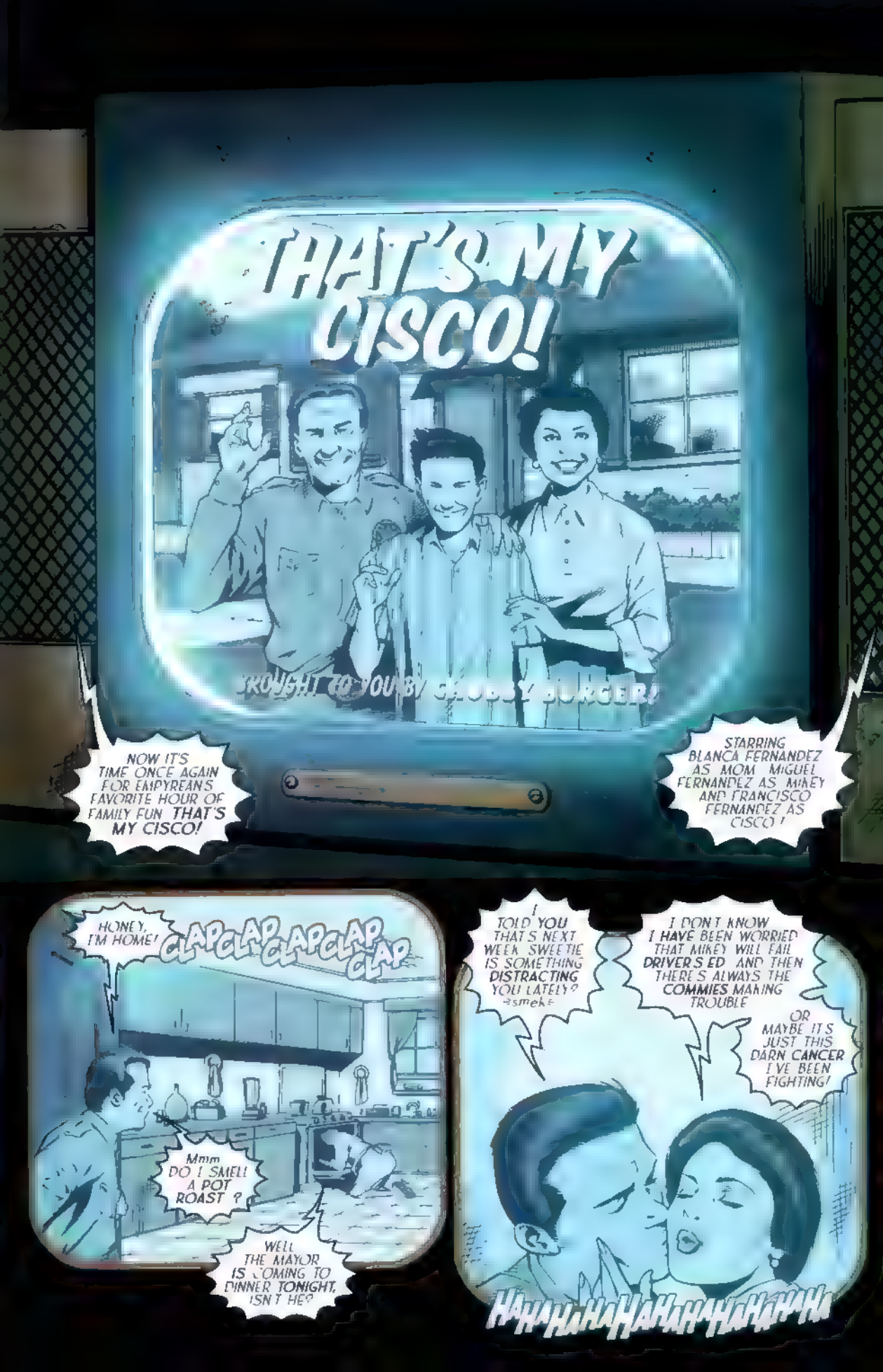
CGE

THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! I'M A VETERAN, BY GUM!
YES SIR BUT THE FACT STILL REMAINS THAT THIS IS OUR NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, AND YOU REALLY NEED TO TAKE THIS UP WITH YOUR REGIONAL PROVIDER
BEEN THERE DONE THAT THEY'RE THE ONES WHO SAID YOU'D CUT OFF MY PRESCRIPTIONS!
NO, MISSY I'M HERE TO SPEAK TO THE BOSS HIMSELF!
SHE IS MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RIGHT NOW BESIDES, SHE REALLY DOESN'T DEAL WITH INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS
SHE DOGGONE BETTER DEAL WITH ME!
FIFTEEN YEARS, THIS COMPANY'S LOOKED AFTER ME STEEL PLATE IN MY HEAD, GLASS EYE, FAKE HEART VALVE, FAKE HIP - NOT ONCE DID YOU SQUAWK ABOUT A DOCTOR'S BILL
NOW, SUDDENLY MY POLICY'S NO GOOD? I'D SAY YOUR BOSS HAS GOT SOME EXPLAININ TO DO
RIBS FOR SIX, SIX FRIES, SIX SLAWS?
I'LL TAKE IT RIGHT HERE

MISTER BARKSDALE
MASTER SERGEANT BARKSDALE
RRR GHT
I THINK I MIGHT KNOW A WAY TO RESOLVE YOUR CLAIM JUST A SECOND
DINNER'S HERE SPECIAL DELIVERY
SEND IT IN
NOW HERE'S WHAT I THINK YOU SHOULD DO
ROOM
MISS BYLETH THAT'S THE BOSS LADY?
RATHER THAN RISK EMBARRASSMENT IN FRONT OF THE BOARD
THANKS MISSY I KNEW IF I PUSHED HARD ENOUGH I'D FIND ONE DECENT HUMAN BEING LEFT AROUND HERE

LEADIN TAE REVISED ESTIMATES FIR OOR QUARTERLY HARVEST
I'VE GOT A BONE TA PICK WITH Y
HOLY HECK!
WH WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME ARE YOU ?!
HUNGRY
AAAIIIEEEEEEEEEE--*
BOARD
ROOM
BOARD

ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF!
DIABLO!
SHUT THE HELL UP, DOG! WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU?!
BUT, SHEIK! THIS CAMEL IS NO GOOD!
WHAT, DID HIS HUMP SPRING A LEAK?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
arf! arf! arf!
HATE TA TELL YA THAT WASN'T HIS HUMP LEAKIN
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
AH, WHAT DOES SHE KNOW? YOU WON'T LET ME DOWN, WILL YA, HUMPY?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
arf! arf! arf!
DEPENDS HOW MUCH YOU'RE PAYIN', SHEIK
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA


THAT'S MY CISCO!
BROUGHT TO YOU BY CLOBBY BURGER!
NOW IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR EMPYREANS FAVORITE HOUR OF FAMILY FUN THAT'S MY CISCO!
STARRING BLANCA FERNANDEZ AS MOM MIGUEL FERNANDEZ AS MIKEY AND FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ AS CISCO!
HONEY, I'M HOME!
CLAPCLAP CLAPCLAP CLAP
Mmm DO I SMELL A POT ROAST?
WELL THE MAYOR IS COMING TO DINNER TONIGHT, ISN'T HE?
I TOLD YOU THAT'S NEXT WEEK SWEETIE IS SOMETHING DISTRACTING YOU LATELY? -smek-
I DON'T KNOW I HAVE BEEN WORRIED THAT MIKEY WILL FAIL DRIVER'S ED AND THEN THERE'S ALWAYS THE COMMIES MAKING TROUBLE
OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THIS DARN CANCER I'VE BEEN FIGHTING!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

AH, YEAH HOW COULD I FORGET YOU?
HIYA, MOM! DAD. CAN I BORROW THE PATROL CAR TONIGHT?
CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP

SON, I CAN'T LEND OUT THE BLACK AND WHITE!
BUT, DAD--! THERE'S A DRAG RACE TONIGHT ON CHURCH STREET! ALL THE OTHER KIDS PARENTS ARE LETTING THEM GO!
OH MY GOD. NO.

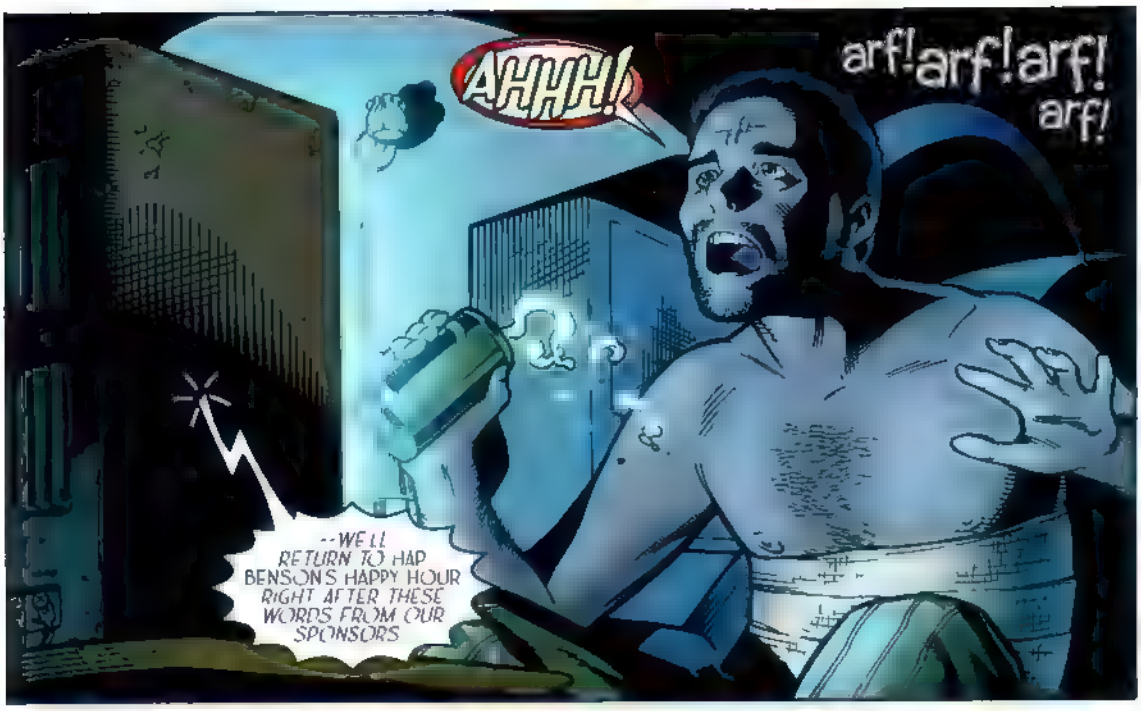
HONEY I BURNED THE POT-ROAST!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

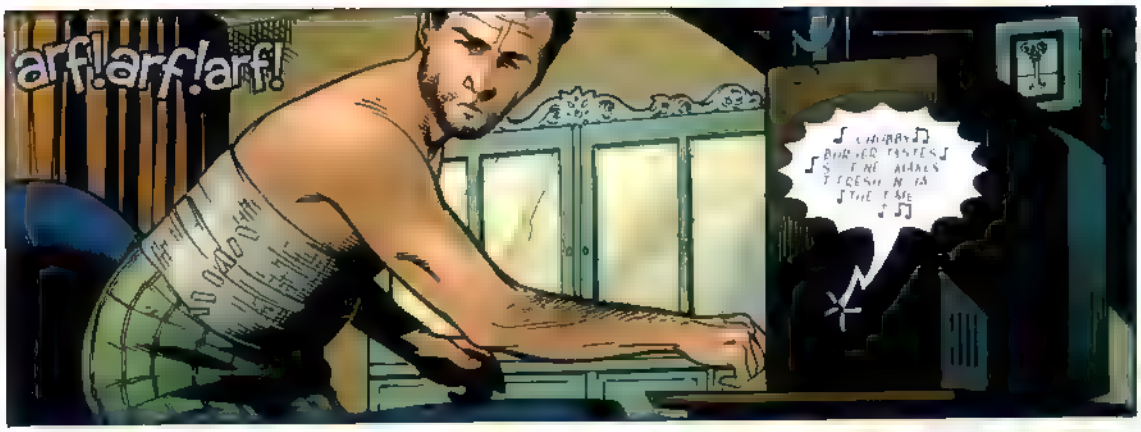
B-BLANCA, YOU'RE
DEAD TIRED OF THAT LOUSY OVEN!
I COULD BUY US A NEW ONE IF I WIN TONIGHT'S RACE
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

NO MIKEY THERE'LL BE OTHER RACES DON'T TRY TO GROW UP TOO FAST- LIFE'S SHORT ENOUGH AS IT IS
AWWWWWWWW
MIGUEL ?!

WH- ? NOW I'M DEAD, TOO?
NOT QUITE

BUT THAT CAN BE ARRANGED...!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH

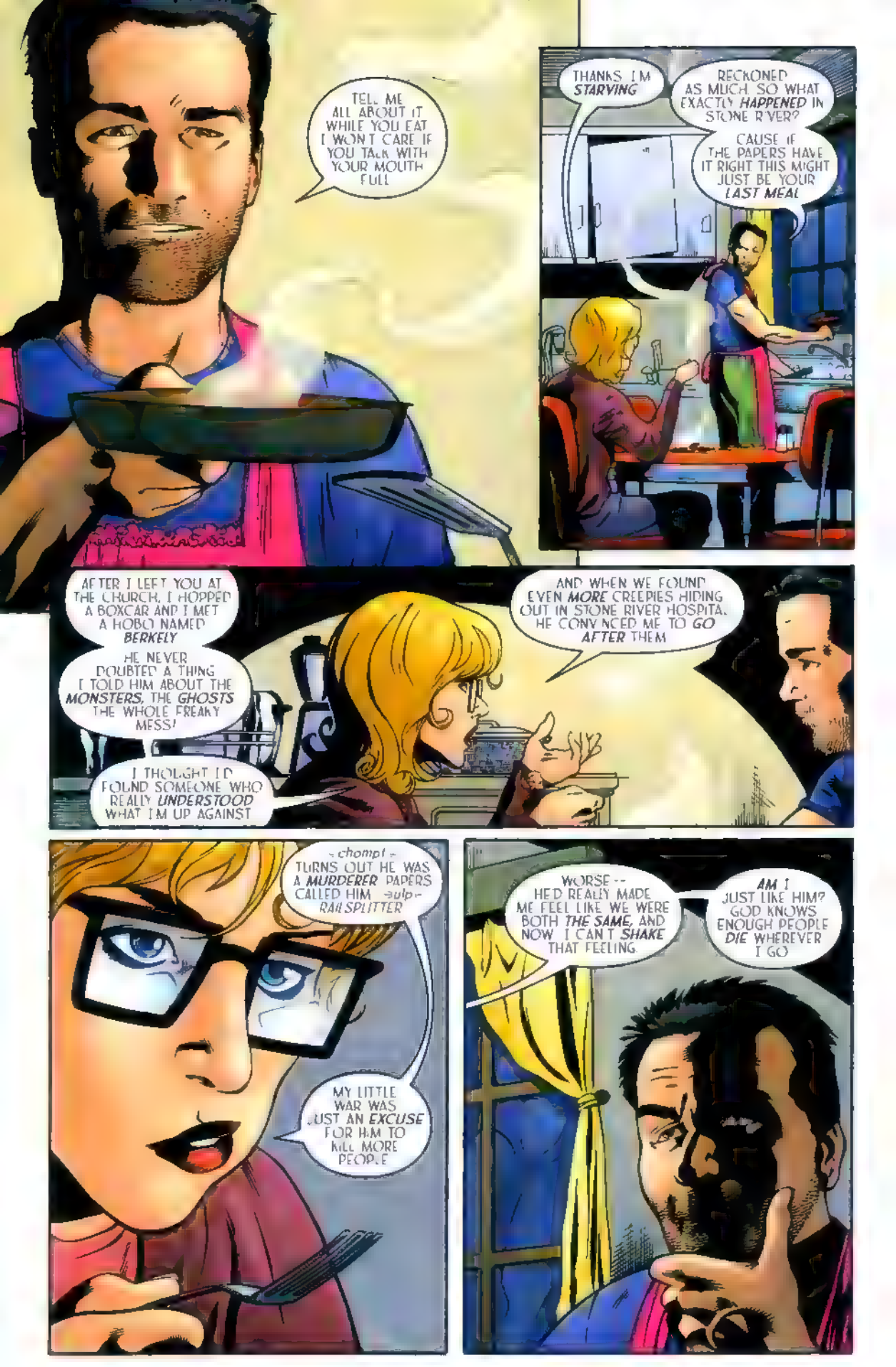

AHHH!
arf!arf!arf!
arf!
--WE'LL RETURN TO HAP BENSON'S HAPPY HOUR RIGHT AFTER THESE WORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS


arf!arf!arf!
♪ CHUBBY ♪
♪ BURGER TASTES ♪
♪ ♪

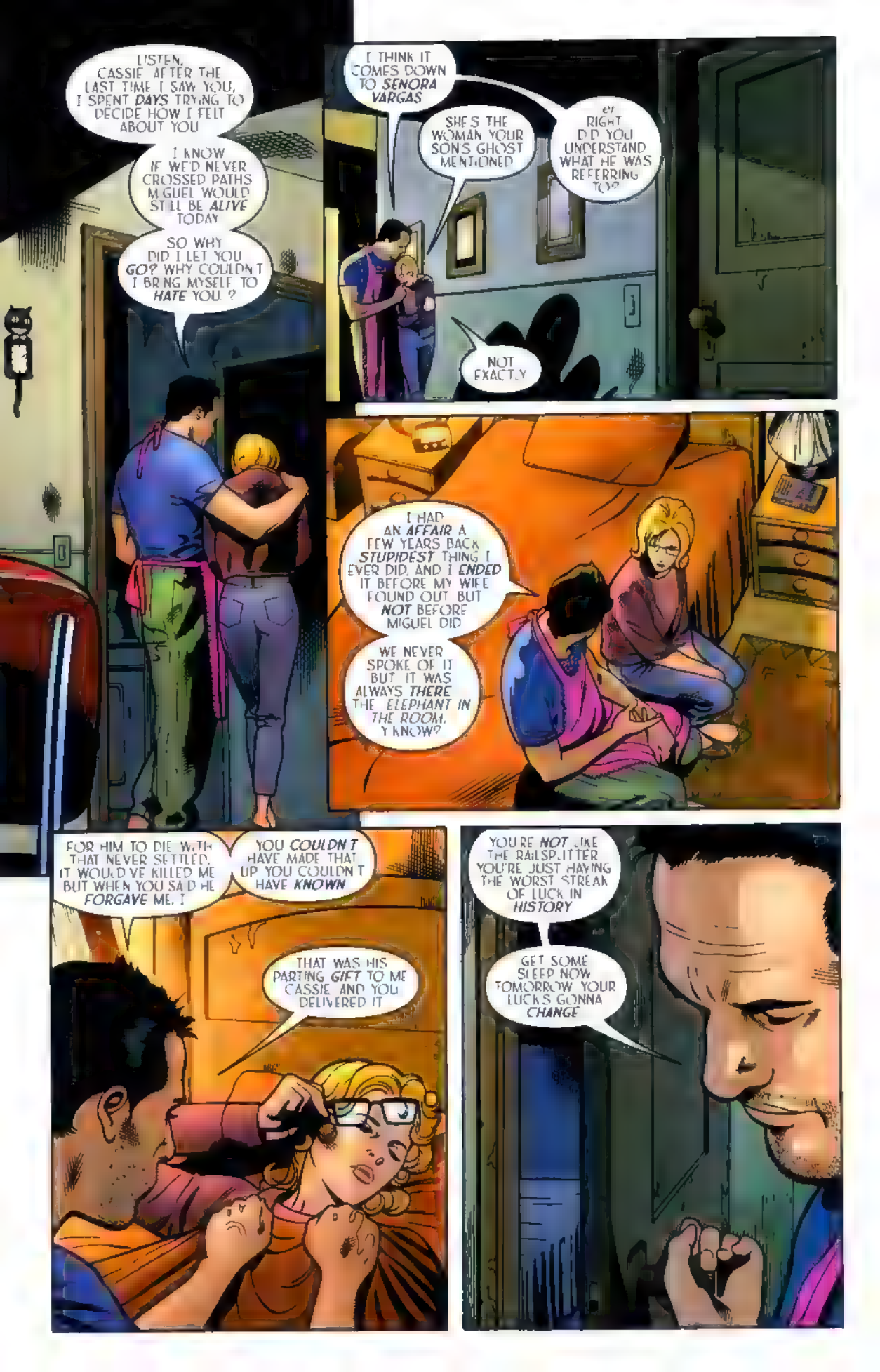
ARF! ARF! ARF!
DIABLO! THAT'S ENOUGH!

AW NO
ARKWEATHER LAYS 6 IN STONE RIVER

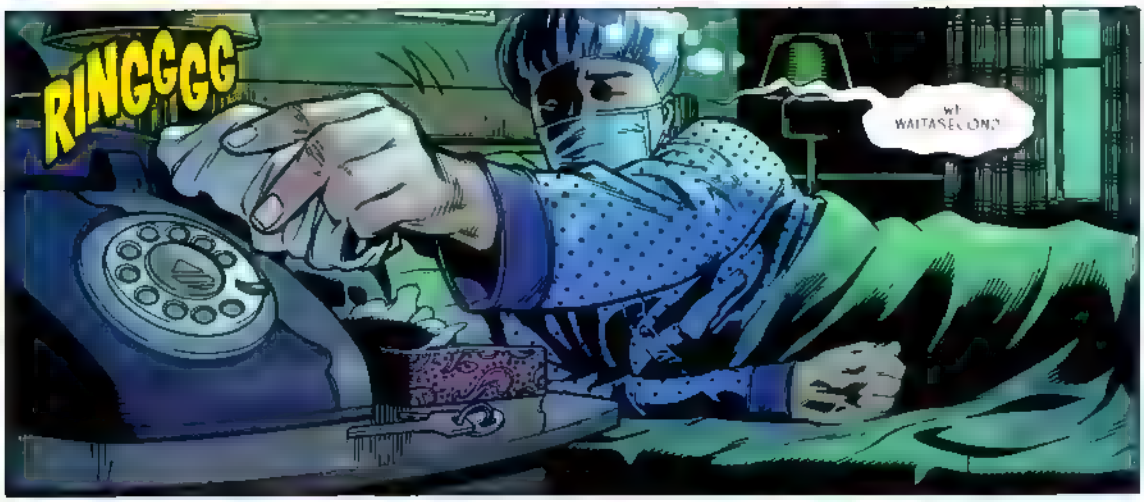
CASSIE YOU PROMISED
ahuh, ahuh snff
SO SORRY ahuh I'M SOO SORRY ahuh
I KNOW I'M THE LAST PERSON YOU EVER WANTED TO SEE AGAIN
BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I COULD THINK OF WHO MIGHT UNDERSTAND SNFF


TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT WHILE YOU EAT I WON'T CARE IF YOU TALK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL
THANKS I'M STARVING
RECKONED AS MUCH SO WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED IN STONE RIVER?
CAUSE IF THE PAPERS HAVE IT RIGHT THIS MIGHT JUST BE YOUR LAST MEAL
AFTER I LEFT YOU AT THE CHURCH, I HOPPED A BOXCAR AND I MET A HOBO NAMED BERKELY
HE NEVER DOUBTED A THING I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE MONSTERS, THE GHOSTS THE WHOLE FREAKY MESS!
I THOUGHT I'D FOUND SOMEONE WHO REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT I'M UP AGAINST
AND WHEN WE FOUND EVEN MORE CREEPIES HIDING OUT IN STONE RIVER HOSPITAL HE CONVINCED ME TO GO AFTER THEM
-chomp!- TURNS OUT HE WAS A MURDERER PAPERS CALLED HIM -gulp- RAILSPLITTER
MY LITTLE WAR WAS JUST AN EXCUSE FOR HIM TO KILL MORE PEOPLE
WORSE -- HE'D REALLY MADE ME FEEL LIKE WE WERE BOTH THE SAME, AND NOW I CAN'T SHAKE THAT FEELING.
AM I JUST LIKE HIM? GOD KNOWS ENOUGH PEOPLE DIE WHEREVER I GO

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION? I MEAN, WHY COME TO ME INSTEAD OF YOUR PARENTS? THEY MUST BE SICK WITH WORRY!
HOW COULD THEY UNDERSTAND? YOU'VE SEEN THE THINGS I'M FIGHTING--THE WOLFMEN, ANYWAY
DIDN'T YOU--?
WELL, IT WAS DARK
OH, NO YOU DON'T! DON'T YOU LIE TO ME OR PATRONIZE ME, OR WHATEVER...
I'M HERE BECAUSE I NEED YOUR HONEST, PROFESSIONAL OPINION AS A COP AS SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE A GOOD HARD LOOK AT ME
TELL ME, SHERIFF FERNANDEZ AM I A KILLER? AM I LIKE BERKELY?!
BECAUSE THE FARTHER I GO THE LESS SENSE ANY OF THIS MAKES. I DON'T SEEM TO KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE. AND I CAN'T DO THIS ALONE


LISTEN, CASSIE AFTER THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU, I SPENT DAYS TRYING TO DECIDE HOW I FELT ABOUT YOU
I KNOW IF WE'D NEVER CROSSED PATHS MIGUEL WOULD STILL BE ALIVE TODAY
SO WHY DID I LET YOU GO? WHY COULDN'T I BRING MYSELF TO HATE YOU ?
I THINK IT COMES DOWN TO SENORA VARGAS
SHE'S THE WOMAN YOUR SON'S GHOST MENTIONED
or RIGHT DID YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS REFERRING TO?
NOT EXACTLY
I HAD AN AFFAIR A FEW YEARS BACK STUPIDEST THING I EVER DID, AND I ENDED IT BEFORE MY WIFE FOUND OUT BUT NOT BEFORE MIGUEL DID
WE NEVER SPOKE OF IT BUT IT WAS ALWAYS THERE THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM, Y KNOW?
FOR HIM TO DIE WITH THAT NEVER SETTLED, IT WOULD'VE KILLED ME BUT WHEN YOU SAID HE FORGAVE ME, I
YOU COULDN'T HAVE MADE THAT UP YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN
THAT WAS HIS PARTING GIFT TO ME CASSIE AND YOU DELIVERED IT
YOU'RE NOT LIKE THE RAILSPLITTER YOU'RE JUST HAVING THE WORST STREAK OF LUCK IN HISTORY
GET SOME SLEEP NOW TOMORROW YOUR LUCK'S GONNA CHANGE

RINGGGG RINGGGG
wh
Wha ?
VACANCY
NO VACANCY
M
O
T
E
L


RINGGGG
wh
WAITASEC ON?

MELCHIOR HERE
WHO ?
Um YES YES, I DID GIVE HIM MY CARD GO AHEAD AND PATCH HIM THROUGH

SPECIAL AGENT GUNNAR MELCHIOR SPEAKING
YES, I REMEMBER YOU WHAT S THIS ABOUT?

SHE S WHAT?!
OKAY OKAY, KEEP HER THERE I CAN BE THERE IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS I ASSUME SHE DOESN T KNOW YOU VE CALLED ME ?

NO SHE'S ASLEEP JUST HURRY OKAY?
RINGGGG RINGGGG
PURVIS HERE THIS'D BETTER BE GOOD
N. B. I.
N.B.I.
OF COURSE I'M WORKING LATE! CUT THE CHIT-CHAT AND TELL ME WHY YOU CALLED, AGENT MELCHIOR I'M BUSY HERE
YOU'VE FOUND HER?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT SHE SHOWED UP AT THE SHERIFF'S HOUSE IN TUCKER, GOSSMER SHE ACTUALLY CAME TO HIM FOR HELP, EVEN THOUGH SHE KILLED HIS SON!
CRAZY IS AS CRAZY DOES
I'M ABOUT TO HEAD OVER WITH AGENTS FINNEY AND CALDWELL BUT YOU SAID TO NOTIFY YOU BEFORE WE TRIED APPREHENDING HER AGAIN
I KNOW WHAT I SAID, SON! GIMME HALF A SECOND TO THINK

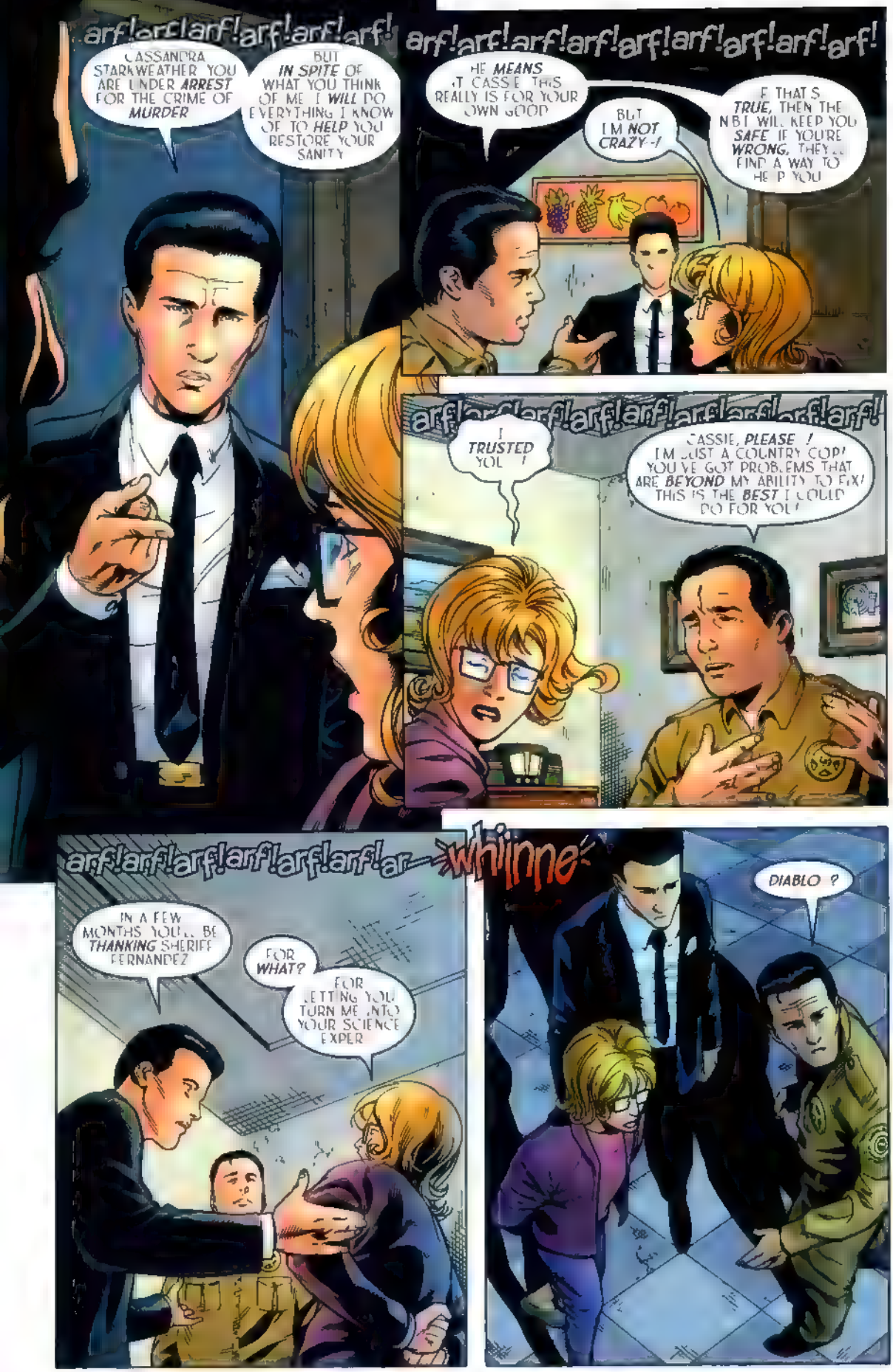
ALL RIGHT SON HERE'S WHAT TO DO GO THERE ALONE LEAVE BEHIND THOSE TWO NITWITS YOU CALL ASSISTANTS AND GO GET HER YOURSELF NO MUSS NO FUSS
BUT, SIR! FINNEY AND CALDWELL DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WR
I'M TRUSTING YOU TO DO THE JOB DISCREETLY AND YOU'RE QUESTIONING MY JUDGMENT?
NO, SIR! ALL I MEANT WAS
I'LL SEND A PRISONER TRANSPORT TEAM TO MEET YOU THERE AND HAUL HER BACK TO THE CRIMINAL PSYCH FACILITIES DON'T WORRY YOU'LL STILL GET FULL CREDIT FOR THE BUST
ONE LAST THING, GUNNAR I KNOW WHAT A NEAT FREAK YOU ARE AND IN A FORENSICS LAB IT ALMOST SEEMS NORMAL BUT OUT IN THE FIELD, WITH OTHER AGENTS WATCHING YOU...?
YOU JUST KEEP THAT ANTISEPTIC CRAP YOU DO TO YOURSELF UNDERSTAND?
YES SIR OF COURSE SIR
KID'S GOT A BRIGHT FUTURE LAST THING WE NEED'S RUMORS IN THE BUREAU THAT HE'S SOME KINDA WEIRDO
HE'LL HAVE ENOUGH EXPLAINING TO DO ONCE HE LOSES THIS PRISONER

UID KELL FIR A NAPKIN RAGHT ABOOT NOO
jack's shack
YES. YOUR AGENT WILL REMAIN UNHARMED - PROVIDED HE HANDS HER OVER WITHOUT QUESTION
VERY GOOD, MISTER PURVIS THE ADVERSARY WILL SEE TO YOUR REWARD ONCE WE RENDER HER UNTO HIM
NO, I DON'T THINK PRESIDENT IS OUT OF THE QUESTION
GOODBYE
SERVIETTE
CHEERS LASS
THE STARKWEATHER GIRL IS IN CUSTODY WE SHALL COLLECT HER FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND PERSONALLY ESCORT HER BACK TO PERDITION
KEEP IN MIND THAT THE GIRL MUST ARRIVE ALIVE THE ADVERSARY WISHES TO EXAMINE HER HIMSELF
AYE, AN SENCE WHEN DAE CONSTABLES SURRENDER PRESONERS TAE INSURANCE EXECUTIVES, BYLETH?
THEY'LL THINK WE'RE NBI AGENTS IT SHOULD ALL GO QUICKLY AND QUIETLY
AN FIR THIS YE NEED THE ENTIRE BOORD O DIRECTORS?!
WHY DRAG ME ALOONG IF I CANNAE HAVE A SQUARE GO AT ANYONE
OR AT LEAST SINK ME WEE FANGS IN A THROOT OR TAE? TIS A WEST O TALENT!
=SIGH= BRAATHWAATE IF I EVER FIND OUT THE HUMANS IN YOUR WEE DISTRICT DON'T REALLY SPEAK WITH THAT LUDICROUS ACCENT

OOL UM SAYIN ES WE STUDY HARD TAE SCARE TH WEE MONKEYS ON THE R OWN TERMS, BUT I SELDOM GET TAE USE WHA I LAIRN!
LIKE THES NEW LOOK I PECKED UP AT THE DRIVE-IN LAST WEEK
PURE DEID BRILLIANT, SO IT ES!
ENOUGH ALREADY WE ARE ALL GOING ON THIS MISSION BECAUSE WE WILL NEVER AGAIN UNDERESTIMATE THIS GIRL
IF WE ENCOUNTER RESISTANCE, BRAATHWAATE YOU MAY KILL THE LAWMEN WEARING WHATEVER FACE YOU CHOOSE BUT ONLY IF THINGS GO SOUR UNDERSTAND?
FAIR ENOUGH
KRRUNCH
OCH!
MERCIFESS HELL WHAS THES ABOMINATION SUPPOSED TAE BE?
ZAT WOULD BE ONE OF ZE NEW HOW YOU SAY? SYNTHETIQUE HEART VALVES WE ADD TO ZE VETERANS COVERAGE LAST YEAR -
WHICH YOU WOULD KNOW IF YOU BOTHER TO READ ZE MEMO
BAD ENOUGH THE AULD BLAMPOT TASTED LIKE A WEE HARD D'SEASE WITHOOT HALF O HIM BEIN BOILED TAEGETHER!

ARF! ARF! ARF!
arf! arf! arf!
uhh
YOU'RE HEADING IN TO WORK NOW ?
Hunh? NO. I JUST ALL MY OTHER CLOTHES WERE DIRTY
Uh-huh THAT MUST BE WHY YOU SHAVED, TOO
WELL IT'S SWEET OF YOU TO CLEAN UP FOR ME BUT I THINK I PREFERRED THE LITTLE APRON
WHOA, SHERIFF - JUST KIDDING!
GO BACK TO BED, CASSIE YOU'VE ONLY BEEN DOWN A COUPLE OF HOURS AND YOU COULD USE A FULL NIGHT'S SLEEP
I'D RATHER STAY UP AND TALK
NO, REALLY I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP RIGHT NOW!
I WAS HAVING NIGHTMARES, ANYWAY AND THE DOG WON'T STOP BARKING

arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!
DAMMIT, CASSIE! WHY DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE EVERYTHING SO HARD?
AHH!
TWO FACED JERK! ALL THAT TALK EARLIER
I MEANT EVERY WORD OF IT! I'M NOT DOING THIS TO HURT YOU. JUST THE OPPOSITE!
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. YOU CAN'T DO THIS ALONE, AND PEOPLE DIE WHEREVER YOU GO!
arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!
THAT MEANS YOU HAVE TO GET OFF THE STREETS, AND YOU NEED HELP FROM SOMEONE QUALIFIED AT THIS SORT OF THING!
AND WHO ON EREBUS IS THAT?! YOU GOT A MONSTER SQUAD IN YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT?!
I CALLED THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION. THEY HAVE A GUY NAMED MELCHIOR WHO SPECIALIZES IN
OH, MY GOD NO! I MET HIM, CISCO, AND HE'S DEFINITELY NOT ON MY SIDE!
BUT HE PROMISED TO
I DON'T CARE WHAT HE SAID. YOU CAN'T HAND ME OVER TO HIM! PLEASE!
arf! arf! arf! arf!
IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT


arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!
CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR THE CRIME OF MURDER
BUT IN SPITE OF WHAT YOU THINK OF ME I WILL DO EVERYTHING I KNOW OF TO HELP YOU RESTORE YOUR SANITY
arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!
HE MEANS T CASSIE THIS REALLY IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD
BUT I'M NOT CRAZY -!
IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN THE NBI WILL KEEP YOU SAFE IF YOU'RE WRONG, THEY'LL FIND A WAY TO HELP YOU
arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!
I TRUSTED YOU !
CASSIE, PLEASE ! I'M JUST A COUNTRY COP! YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS THAT ARE BEYOND MY ABILITY TO FIX! THIS IS THE BEST I COULD DO FOR YOU!
arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!arf!ar
IN A FEW MONTHS YOU'LL BE THANKING SHERIFF FERNANDEZ
FOR WHAT?
FOR LETTING YOU TURN ME INTO YOUR SCIENCE EXPER
whinne
DIABLO ?

?
I THOUGHT YOU CAME ALONE
I DID THAT MUST BE THE TRANSPORT TEAM PURVIS CALLED IN BUT
I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D BE HERE SO SOON
HELLO ?

AGENT BYLETH NBI
WE'RE HERE TO PICK UP THE PRISONER
OKAY Um
YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SEE MY DOG WHEN YOU PULLED UP?

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"Route 666 (is) a Classic Scare"
—The Washington Times
Route 666
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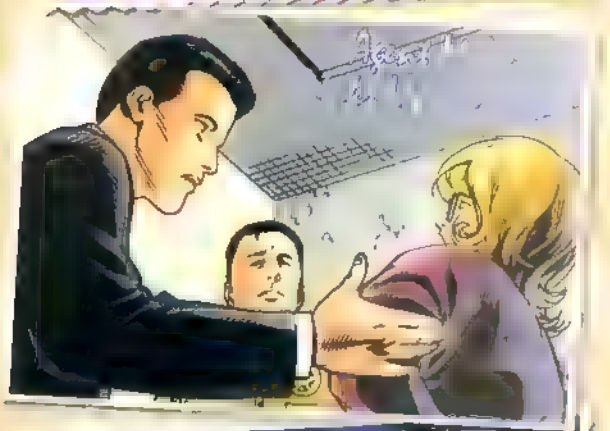
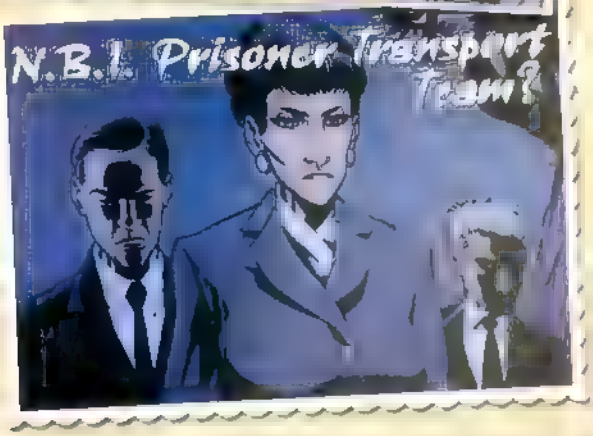
LOCAL GIRL ESCAPES MENTAL INSTITUTION – KILLS 3

# Greetings From... TUCKER






Dear Cassie,

As I write this, you are still asleep in my son's old room, trusting I'll keep you safe as long as you stay beneath my roof. In a very short time, you will think that I betrayed that trust, but I hope once you're safely in custody, you'll calm down enough to read this. I need you to understand this is the best way I could help you.

You yourself said it earlier: there's a trail of dead people in your wake, my son included. I know you didn't mean for him to die. In fact, I think you didn't want any of the eight other deaths (that I know of) associated with you since your escape from the asylum. Still, very bad things keep happening around you, so getting you off the streets is the only responsible thing to do.

I've contacted Agent Gunnar Melchior of the National Bureau of Investigation to oversee your capture. He guarantees you'll be kept for psychiatric evaluation, instead of getting tossed in a regular jail. If we find that all this stuff you say about ghosts and monsters is all in your head, Melchior knows ways to treat that. If what you say about a conspiracy to steal souls is even halfway true, you'll have the help and protection of the N.B.I.

Either way, I'll stay in touch and make sure you're okay. I only hope you'll still speak to me.

Sincerely,

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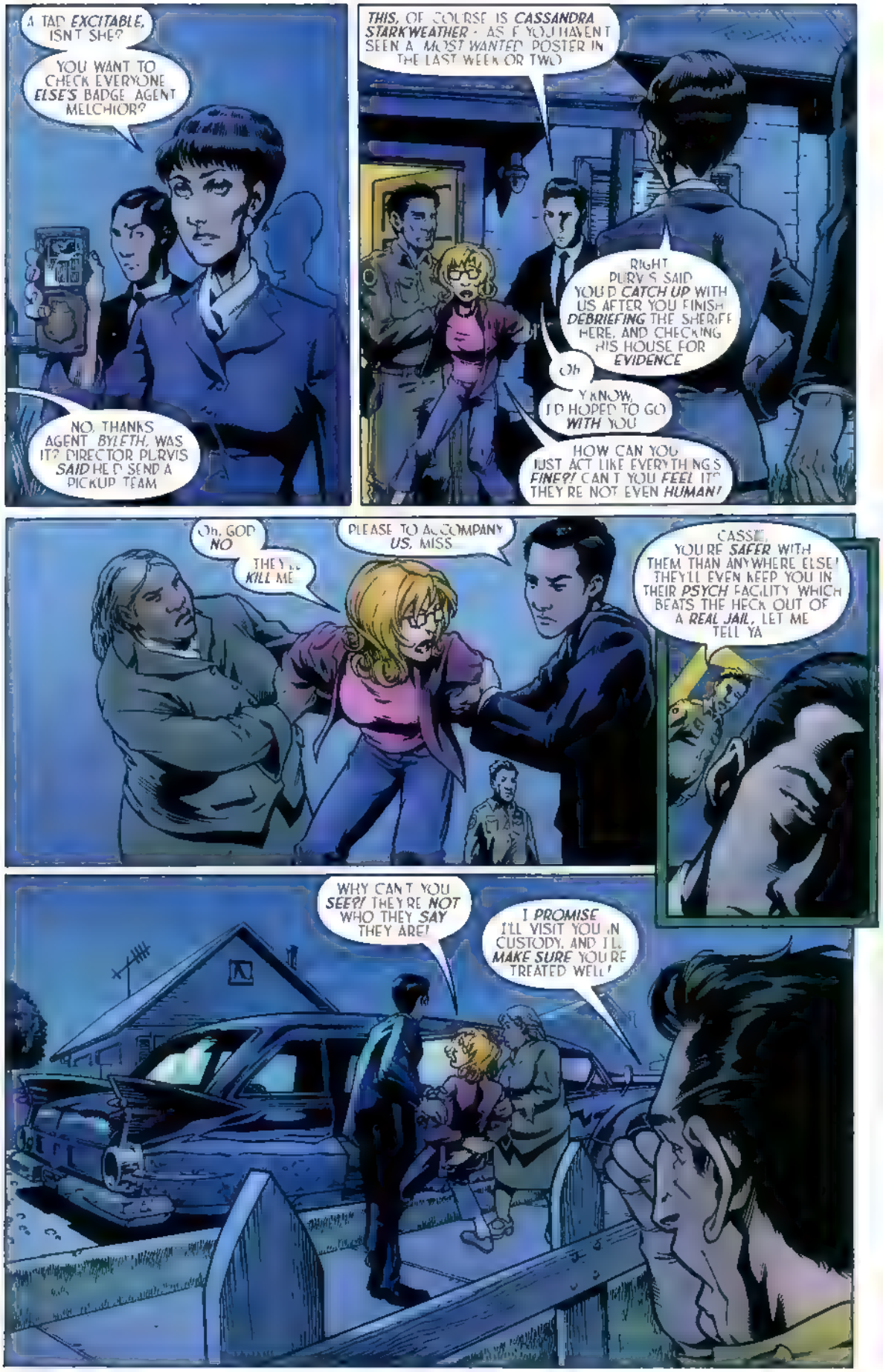
CISCO, PLEASE!
DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME!


A TAD *EXCITABLE*, ISN'T SHE?
YOU WANT TO CHECK EVERYONE *ELSE'S* BADGE AGENT MELCHIOR?
NO, THANKS AGENT *BYLETH*, WAS IT? DIRECTOR PURVIS *SAID* HE'D SEND A PICKUP TEAM
*THIS*, OF COURSE IS *CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER* - AS IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN A *MOST WANTED* POSTER IN THE LAST WEEK OR TWO
RIGHT PURVIS SAID YOU'D *CATCH UP* WITH US AFTER YOU FINISH *DEBRIEFING* THE SHERIFF HERE, AND CHECKING HIS HOUSE FOR *EVIDENCE*
OH
Y'KNOW, I'D HOPED TO GO *WITH* YOU
HOW CAN YOU JUST ACT LIKE EVERYTHING'S *FINE?!* CAN'T YOU *FEEL* IT? THEY'RE NOT EVEN *HUMAN!*
OH, GOD *NO*
THEY'LL *KILL* ME
PLEASE TO ACCOMPANY *US*, MISS
CASSIE, YOU'RE *SAFER* WITH THEM THAN ANYWHERE ELSE! THEY'LL EVEN KEEP YOU IN THEIR *PSYCH* FACILITY WHICH BEATS THE HECK OUT OF A *REAL JAIL*, LET ME TELL YA
WHY CAN'T YOU *SEE?!* THEY'RE *NOT* WHO THEY *SAY* THEY ARE!
I *PROMISE* I'LL VISIT YOU IN CUSTODY, AND I'LL *MAKE SURE* YOU'RE TREATED WELL!

DON'T WORRY MELCHIOR WE WON'T DO A PERP WALK OR TALK TO THE PRESS UNTIL YOU'RE THERE
MUCH OBLIGED
YOU'RE SURE THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT RIGHTS?
LET'S HIT THE ROAD
PLEEEASE! YOU HAVE TO LISTEN!
YOU HAVE TO SEE! I CAN'T BE THE ONLY ONE!
YOU HAVE TO SEE
WH--?
HOLY
DIOS!

WHAT R YE *GAWKIN'* AT?

THEY *KNOW!*

**KILL THEM BOTH!**

AGENT
-MELCHIOR ?!
CISCO, HELP ME!
BETTER FIR YE AND TH GIRRUL EF YE LEAVE THA WEE THING EN ITS HOOLSTER
I
I
rattle rattle
SORRY, SHERIFF. THE LITTLE WITCH MAY HAVE OPENED YOUR EYES.
BUT SHE SEALED YOUR FATE
¡HIJO DE LA GRAN
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

SPLUT
AARHH!
AHM GOIN TAE FEED YE THA PESTOL
OH!! YE BOGGIN BASSA--!
SO HELP ME BOAB AH WIL
WHY ISN'T HE DEAD?! BULLETS WORKED ON THE WOLFMEN!
THEY'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS!
HOW DIFFERENT?

PUT IT DOWN, BRAATHWAATE! WE NEED HER ALIVE!
BUGGER OFF, YE HAVERIN BIDDIE

BRAATHWAATE PUT THE CAR DOWN!
PUT IT--
BOOM!

THROOM
DAMM T BRAATHWAATE IF YOU'VE KILLED HER !
HOOTS WOMAN! AH M FEID UP W TH YUIR OORDERS, SO AH AM! ALWAYS W THE HARD WORD AND THAT SOUR FACE LIKE A BUL.DOG CHEWIN A WASP!
NIVVER AGAIN
URK

YOU'VE FORGOTTEN *WHY* YOU TAKE ORDERS FROM ME

PERHAPS IF YOU STOP WAGGING YOUR *TONGUE* LONG ENOUGH, YOU'LL *REMEMBER*

-ACK-

GYAARRR--!

*BEHAVE,* AND I MIGHT GIVE IT *BACK* TO YOU IN A FEW DAYS

HROOOO

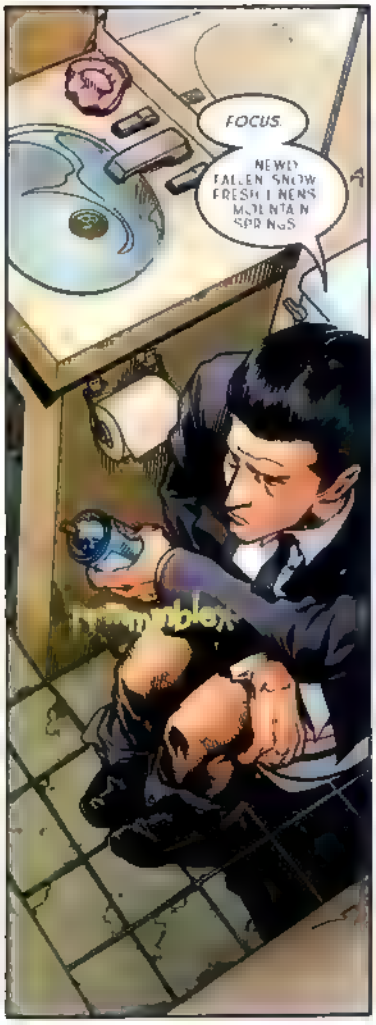
THE DARK SPIRITS SAID THEY'D BE SENDING THE Big GUNS AFTER ME
COME ON I'VE GOT A FEW GUNS OF MY OWN
KLIK
BLAM BLAM
SPAK
SORRY! I... I THOUGHT YOU WERE THEM!
I OUGHTTA LEAVE YOU UP HERE! NOW C'MON!
WHERE ?
THE BASEMENT I HAVE A ITTLE SURPRISE

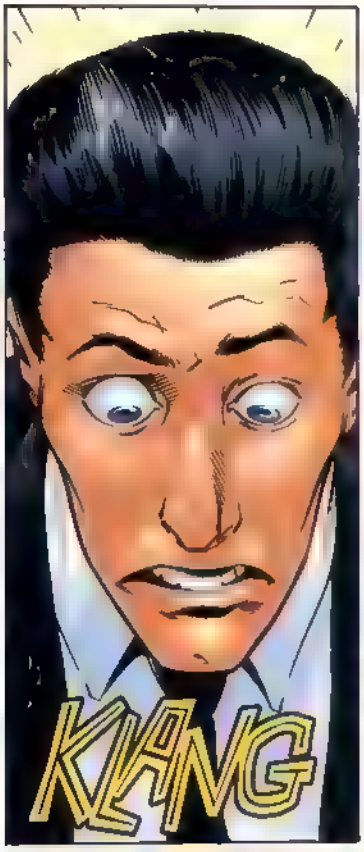
I SET UP A BOMB SHELTER DOWN HERE A FEW YEARS BACK, WHEN THE REDS TRIED TO PUT MISSILES ON GRANDY ISLAND
IT'LL BUY US A LITTLE TIME
DOWN HERE!
SHERIFF WAIT! JUST GIVE US THE GIRL AND WE'LL LET YOU
SLAM
--LIVE!
BOOMBOOMBOOM
BANK VAULT DOOR, STEEL REINFORCED WALLS NO WAY THEY'RE GETTING IN HERE

HEY YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S THE STRESS SOMETIMES IT GOES STRAIGHT TO MY BOWELS
LOVELY
CISCO, WHY *ARE* WE IN HERE? IS THERE ANOTHER WAY *OUT*?
NO BUT I HAVE PLENTY OF *FIREPOWER* STASHED DOWN HERE. WE'LL *NEED* IT AGAINST THOSE FREAKS
*AND* I CAN HOLLER FOR *HELP* ON THE RADIO
X-CHAK
S. IS THIS THE *BATHROOM* ?
YUP RECKON YOU BETTER GET IN THERE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE
EXHAUST FAN
IS IT IS IT *CLEAN* ?

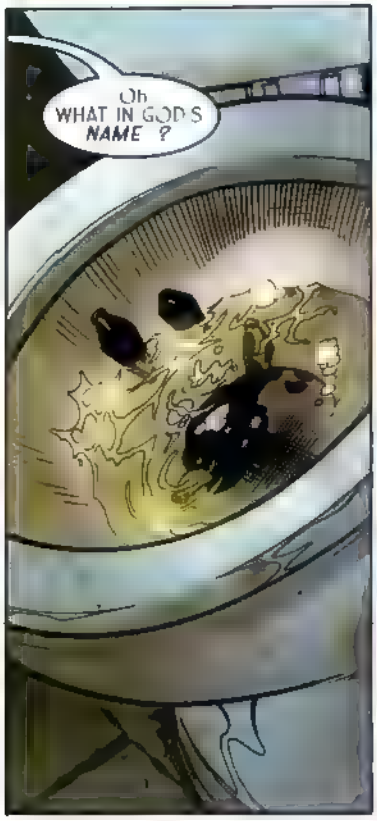
NEVER MIND
PHIL! THIS IS CISCO! I NEED YOU TO SEND EVERY UNIT AVAILABLE TO MY HOUSE! CALL IN BACKUP FROM COUNTY DISPATCH TOO!
Uurrmm
NO USE THAT DOOR WON'T BUDGE
NAAMAH, I NEED YOU TO GET IN THERE DESTROY THE MEN AND OPEN THAT DOOR
NIHONGA! MICTIAN! GO BACK UP WITH THE OTHERS AND KEEP ANY CURIOUS NEIGHBORS AWAY I'LL JOIN YOU IN A MOMENT
HAI
D'ACCORD BYETH
IF ZERE IS PLUMBING IN ZERE I CAN GET IN

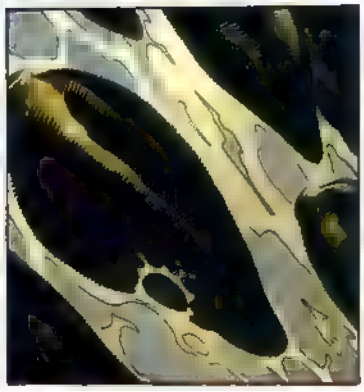
CISCO ?! WHAT THE HECK'S GOIN ON OUT THERE? YOU OKAY?!
JUST GET SOMEBODY--A LOT OF SOMEBODIES--OUT HERE ASAP! AND MAKE SURE THEY'RE LOADED FOR BEAR!
SOME CRAZIES JUST CRASHED THEIR CAR THROUGH THE FRONT OF MY HOUSE AND NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL ME, UNDERSTAND?!
ROGER THAT!
HANG IN THERE BOSS!
MELCHIOR! YOU OKAY IN THERE ?
FINE! I'M FINE! JUST GIVE ME A SECOND, WILL YOU ?
SURE, BUT HURRY--WE'RE GOING TO BLAST OUR WAY OUT OF HERE AS SOON AS OUR BACKUP SHOWS!
DO WE HAVE TO TAKE THEM ON, CISCO?
COULDN'T WE JUST CRAWL OUT THROUGH THE AIR DUCT OR SOMETHING ?
NOT UNLESS YOU CAN CRAWL THROUGH AN EXHAUST FAN--
IN A PIPE SIX INCHES AROUND
IT WAS ONLY EVER MEANT TO KEEP US FROM SUFFOCATING


FOCUS.
NEWLY FALLEN SNOW FRESH LINENS MOUNTAIN SPRINGS
mmmble


KLANG

SHERIFF DOES YOUR S SEPTIC TANK EVER BACK UP? CAUSE
I DIDN'T EVEN GO YET
SLURP SLURP
BLOOP
BLOOP BLOOP


Oh WHAT IN GOD'S NAME ?



SHUP
lep
SHWOOSH
SLISH

KRASH
ZZZORRY ABOUT ZE ZZMELL
NOT HALF AS SORRY AS YOU ARE NOW!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
Spat
Splut
Plap
I AM LEGION SHERIFF. YOU KILL ONLY A HANDFUL OF ME MAYBE TEN OR TWENTY more?
HOW MANY MORE BULLETZZ ARE IN ZAT GUN ?

¡CONYO! IF THIS THING WON'T PUT HER DOWN WHAT WILL?!
NUZZZING IN YOUR ARZZZENAL SHERIFF
tink
SAINTS
THWAK
WILL YOU COME QUIETLY?
OR MUZZZT I HURT YOU, MON CHER?
OKAY OKAY

FWOOSH
ZZZZZZZZZ

EXHAUST FAN
KLIK
WRRRRRRRRRRRR-RRR-RR-RR-K-K-KK-K-K-K
EEEEEEYAAAHHH!
OH GOD OH GOD I CAN'T TAKE THIS
EXHAUST FAN
CISCO
YEAH HONEY?
HOW LONG UNTIL HELP COMES ?

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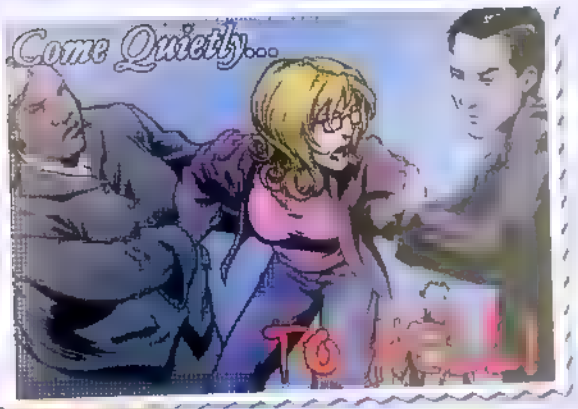
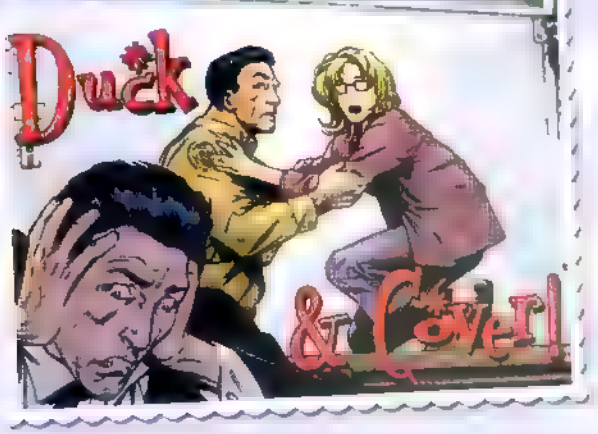
# Greetings From...

# National Bureau of Investigation

## Federal Headquarters






**From the private journal of J. Edgar Purvis**
**Director, National Bureau of Investigation:**

A few hours ago, I tipped off the Board of Directors of Harlequin Healthcare as to the current whereabouts of Cassandra Starkweather. It's the first time I've given up one of our Ten Most Wanted to Byleth and her kind, but they have their own plans for this girl, and to get her they've promised to make me President. That's how much pull those monsters have. So what if they're not even human? Cooperating with the goons from Hell got me this far up the ladder. I'll fall even farther if they're ever exposed.

Starkweather was at the home of a county sheriff. Special Agent Gunnar Melchior, head of our Criminal Psych Division, was already on the scene. I told Melchior that Byleth and her "people" were an N.B.I. team I sent to pick up his prisoner. All that germ-phobic freak had to do was hand over the girl, and this great nation would finally get the leader it deserves.

Then came the call: Melchior somehow screwed up the handoff. Maybe Starkweather saw through their human disguises and warned him what these "agents" really were. I don't know, but whatever happened, none of them are getting out alive.

Right now, they've locked themselves in the Sheriff's homemade bomb shelter and radioed every cop in the next two or three counties for help. If Byleth and her devil-squad don't act fast, this situation could blow up in all our faces.

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WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
WHERE'S CISCO?
POR FAVOR PEOPLE STAND BACK! THIS IS A FEDERAL CRIME SCENE!
NAAMAH
HAI BYLETH SAMA
EVERYONE PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR HOMES! I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR, BUT YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS IMPEDING OUR INVESTIGATION!
IF YOU CARE ABOUT SHERIFF FERNANDEZ THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW IS LET US DO OUR JOB!
HERE COMES PHIL N BARNEY

EVERYBODY GO HOME! WE'LL HANDLE THIS!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
JUST GETTING MY IDENTIFICATION OUT OFFICER
ALL RIGHT BUT SLOWLY.
AGENT BYRETH NBI
ARE YOU SHERIFF FERNANDEZ'S DEPUTY?
Yeah
YKNOW CISCO RADIOED A FEW MINUTES AGO SAYING HIS HOUSE WAS UNDER ATTACK BY SOME CRAZIES
IT'S OKAY, BARNEY THEY'RE G-MEN
SO WHERE IS CISCO? AND HOW'D YOU PEOPLE GET HERE SO FAST?
WE CAME TO PICK UP A COLLEAGUE AGENT MELCHIOR HE'S THE ONE WHO DROVE OUR CAR INTO YOUR FRIEND'S HOUSE AND WE...
THERE'S NO EASY WAY TO TE... YOU THIS

I'M AFRAID THAT SHERIFF FERNANDEZ THAT CISCO IS DEAD
THIS S VERY AWKWARD BUT I NEED YOU TO VACATE THE CRIME SCENE UNTIL MY PEOPLE F NISH THEIR EVALUATION
BUT HOW ? JUST SPOKE TO HIM NOT TEN MINUTES AGO !
OKAY WE'LL CLEAR OUT OF YOUR WAY
BUT NOT UNTIL I SEE THE BODY
UNDERSTAND, DEPUTY
HE S IN THE BASEMENT RIGHT THIS WAY

HERE - YOU DID OKAY WITH A SHOTGUN BEFORE - JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T SHOOT ONE OF US IN THE BACK WHEN WE BREAK FOR IT
CAN I HAVE A SMOKE ?
FORGET IT, NINJA STUFF'LL KILL YOU!
AS IF ANY OF US IS GOING TO GET PAST THOSE th THINGS OUT THERE
BULLETS MIGHT NOT KILL THESE ONES BUT THEY HURT
WE JUST NEED TO HURT THEM ENOUGH
NAAMAH!
WHAT IS TAKING YOU SO LONG?!
SO WHAT MADE THIS MELCHIOR GUY CRACK UP?
HE'S BEEN UNSTABLE SINCE HIS FATHER WAS MURDERED BY CASSIE STARKWEATHER
AGENT MELCHIOR'S BEEN FIXATED ON REVENGE EVER SINCE

FOR SOME REASON MELCHIOR EXTENDED HIS HATRED TO YOUR SHERIFF FOR FAILING TO ARREST THE STARKWEATHER GIRL
NOT LIKE HE DIDN'T TRY TO BUST HER. SHE KILLED HIS SON, FOR GOODNESS SAKE
WHEN WE HEARD MELCHIOR WAS HEADED HERE, WE KNEW HE WAS COMING FOR SHERIFF FERNANDEZ
WE WANTED TO STOP HIM BUT WE WERE TOO LATE
THIS IS WHERE IT HAPPENED
SO WHERE'S THE CORPSE?
ACTUALLY, THERE ARE TWO OF THEM
STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME

HIT THE DECK
K-CHANK
?
PHIL BARNEY
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
SPAK SPAK SPAK
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
SPAK
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
SPAK SPAK
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
BARNEY! PHIL! SLIP OUT THE BACK BEFORE THEY RECOVER!
WE'LL DRAW THE OTHERS OUT FRONT!

SO
MOW EM DOWN!
ON ME! MOVE!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
I'M PRETTY SURE THEY DID!
ONE THING'S FOR SURE WE CAN'T GO BACK FOR THEM!

THEY'RE GOOD COPS AND TOUGH THEY'LL GET OUT SAFE
THEY'LL GET OUT SAFE
THEY WILL, CSUO. I MEAN WHOD STICK AROUND IN THAT BASEMENT AFTER ALL OF THAT?
GET ME TO A TELEPHONE I HAVE TO WARN DIRECTOR PURVIS THAT THE NBI HAS BEEN COMPROMISED
HOW DO YOU KNOW PURVIS DIDN'T SEND THE GOON SQUAD ON PURPOSE?
HE HAS A POINT WE'D BETTER DO SOME HARD THINKING BEFORE WE LET ANYONE KNOW WHERE WE ARE
I AM NOT ASKING I AM TELLING YOU TO GET ME TO A TELEPHONE RIGHT THIS INSTANT!

HOLY CRUD! WHAT IS CISCO MIXED UP IN?
WHA? EARS ARE STILL RINGING
COME ON, PARTNER! DIDN'T CISCO TELL US TO
--BEAT FEET YEAH. JUST GIMME A SECOND TO CHECK OUT THIS ONE'S MASK
I SAID
PHIL--!
WHAT?
PHIL THEY'RE STILL
AAAAAHHHH--*

MICTIAN! DAMBALLA! THAT N'B'. AGENT MUST HAVE DRIVEN HERE IN SOMETHING
FIND HIS CAR SO WE CAN DEPART BEFORE MORE POLICE ARRIVE!
HERE IS YOUR TONGUE BACK BRAATHWAATE
MMMMM
OH BLESS YE, BYLETH' AHLL BE WERKIN TAE GET BACK IN YER GUD GRACES
SAVE IT, BRAATHWAATE I ONLY RETURNED IT TO YOU FOR ONE REASON

SO YOU CAN REPORT BACK TO THE ADVERSARY AND LET HIM KNOW WE FAILED
ZDRAVSTVUITYE BYLE TH
IS STARKWEATHER GIRL READY FOR TRANSPORT?
NO SHE ESCAPED US
JUST AS SHE ELUDED YOU TWO BEFORE
MISTER BRAATHWAATE WILL EXPLAIN THIS TO THE ADVERSARY HIMSELF
SOMEONE'S GONNA GET BEAT UP FROM THE FEET UP
IS ANY SOULS HERE TO COLLECT AT LEAST?
TWO COPS, DOWN IN THE BASEMENT
SPAC BO

BYLETH !
SAVE !
YKNOW THAT OLD SAYIN BOUT DEAD MEN TELLIN NO TALES?
THEN SHUT THE HELL UP!
SO THIS IS FAERWELL, BYLETH YEH'L NAE HA ME TAE KICK AROOND NOO MOORE
JUS REMEMBER
SOMEDAY IT'LL BE YUIR TERN

I'M SORRY

I'VE CALMED DOWN NOW

I NEVER SHOULD'VE PULLED A GUN ON YOU

I'M SORRY TOO, AGENT MELCHIOR

YIIIII!

GOD, NOOO, DON'T LEAVE ME HERE!

NOT HERE! IT'S

KRBH

RWE

IZZY

MEAT PUPPET

I GOT NOTHIN'

PWEI

IT'S FILTHY!
THINK HE'LL BE OKAY, CISCO?
I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS EVER OKAY. CASSIE AGENT MERCHANT HAS SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS TO WORK THROUGH

FACE IT, THE MAN'S A FREAK
POTTERFIELD CIRCUS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AND CHILDREN OF ALL AGES
PLEASE WELCOME THE TUMBLING TRAMPS!
LOOK AT THEM! THEY'RE LOVING IT!
THAT'S THE IDEA. I'M STEPPING OUT FOR A SMOKE, NANCY.
BE RIGHT BACK.

HEY, THERE!
WHERE'S YOUR PARENTS, LITTLE BOY?
giggle
HEY, KID...!

=giggle=
=huff=
=huff=
SLOW DOWN!
KID?!
!
LITTLE BOY WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?

MOM AND POP GOT HIT BY A BUS TWENTY YEARS AGO, LADY BUT I'D ALREADY LEFT HOME BY THEN...
AHH!
GIVE EM MY REGARDS WHEN YA SEE EM?
AGHH-
-HURK-
RIGHT ON SCHEDULE
BIFF
KRAK

Waahh
=A huh=
=A huh=
Waahh
THERE, THERE, GIRLS YOU KNOW THAT IT'S FOR THE BEST
AFTER ALL YOU PICKED HER OUT
=sniff=
=sniff=
FOR THE BEST
=sniff=
IT IS DONE ANYONE ELSE WE SHOULD ATTEND TO WHILE WE'RE IN THIS TOWN?
OH, YES
MANY MORE BUT BEFORE WE GET TO THEM THERE'S ANOTHER THAT YOU MUST BRING HERE
TAKE MY HAND AND SEE WHAT THE GIRLS SEE

Um...DO I HAVE TO, GAL NA?
YOU KNOW HOW IT MAKES MY NOSE BLEED
SORRY ARNOLPHO THERE CAN BE NO MARGIN FOR ERROR IN OUR LINE OF WORK
=Gasp=
YES I SEE HER

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# THE POTTERFIELD CIRCUS

## NOW APPEARING! LIMITED ENGAGEMENT!

The Potterfield Family Circus is proud to present for your entertainment: the nationally infamous

## CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER!

Wanted for a string of brutal murders, Cassie claims it was all the work of monsters disguised as humans!

**THREAT OR MENACE?** *YOU DECIDE!*

## ON A DOUBLE BILL WITH:

## CISCO FERNANDEZ!

The Sheriff of Tucker, Gossmer is now on the run with Starkweather! An attack on his home convinced him that Cassie's story is true! Can he help her avoid the monsters *and* the long arm of the Law?

## SPECIAL OPENING ACT:

## THE DEMON BRAATHWAATE!

This hot-tempered horror from the fiery realm of Perdition failed to capture Cassie when he and his fellow fiends attacked Cisco's house. Now he must report the bad news to his Master – the dread Lord of Perdition...the one...the only...

## THE ADVERSARY!

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RECKON YOU MIGHT CAN STILL TALK BOSS INTO GIVIN YOU A SECOND CHANCE, BRAATHWAATE
FIRST THING I'D DO, THOUGH, IS DITCH THE STUPID ACCENT
YEH'RE A FINE ONE TAE BE MAKIN SPOORT A SOMEONE S ACCENT, YEH CULCHY GIT, YEH!
LEAST I COME BY MINE HONESTLY I WAS A COUNTRY BOY, BORN AN BRED YOU WEREN'T EVER EVEN REALLY HUMAN!
ROUTE 666
DA, IS TRUE YOU ARE BEING WERY DIFFICULT FOR UNDERSTANDING
WERY ANNOYING
POOT, SON. THE WORST IS OVER FOR YOU - YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!
Y'ALL ARE JUST GONNA JOIN THE OTHER SPOOKS IN BOSS COLLECTION HECK, MAYBE YOU'LL SEE SOMEONE YOU KNOW IN THERE!
IT'S THE HIGHLAND HAGGIS HERE WHO OUGHTTA WORRY
HE'S THE ONE HAS TO EXPLAIN TO THE BOSS HOW HE LET CASSIE STARKWEATHER GET AWAY ON ACCOUNT OF HIS OWN BAD TEMPER!

666
AND THE LAST THING I'D DO IN HIS SHOES IS WORK THE BOSS NERVE WITH A STUPID ACCENT I PICKED UP IN THE LAND OF THE LIVIN'
...
YEAH. MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, BEASELY
MAYBE IT IS TIME TO JUST BE MYSELF

SWEET PERDITION AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I'M FINALLY HOME AGAIN
WE GO PROCESS THESE TWO! DO NOT KEEP LORD ADVERSARY WAITING!

BRAATHWAATE! THE ADVERSARY IS EXPECTING YOU!
I KNOW I KNOW
MY LORD! I
I BRING NEWS OF OUR MISSION ON EREBUS
THE STARKWEATHER GIRL ESCAPED YOU. THAT IS ALL I NEED TO KNOW.
PLEASE LORD! THERE WERE MITIGATING CIRCUMSTAN
DO YOU REALLY THINK ANY EXPLANATION WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO ME?
YES, LORD, I DO!
AFTER ALL MY EONS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO YOU, SURELY YOU WILL SEE IN YOUR INFINITE WISDOM THAT I CAN STILL BE OF USE TO YOU!
VERY WELL, YOU MAY GIVE ME HALF YOUR EXPLANATION NOW...
THEN I SHALL DEVOUR YOU WHOLE...
...AND YOU CAN FINISH YOUR EXCUSES ONCE YOU COME OUT THE OTHER END.

I DON'T KNOW, CASSIE THESE REALLY AREN'T MY STYLE
THEY'RE GONNA LOOK GREAT ON YOU. I PICKED 'EM OUT SPECIAL.
BESIDES, IF YOU KEEP RUNNING AROUND IN YOUR UNIFORM, OTHER COPS WILL RECOGNIZE YOU IN A HEART-BEAT
TRUE. THE N.B.I. IS PROBABLY PRINTING MY "WANTED" POSTER RIGHT NOW
Y'KNOW, THIS JUST FEELS SO WRONG TO ME--NOT TURNING TO THE FEDS FOR HELP
WE'VE ALREADY BEEN OVER THIS, CISCO! WHAT IF THOSE MONSTERS HAVE SPIES INSIDE THE BUREAU? I MEAN, THEY MADE AGENT MELCHIOR BELIEVE THEY WERE G MEN!
AND IF THEY CAN GET IN THE N.B.I., THEY COULD PROBABLY INFILTRATE ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY
YOU'D BETTER CHANGE, QUICK, CISCO! I WANNA DITCH THIS CAR NOW

¡CONYO! YOU'RE PUSHIER THAN MY WIFE EVER WAS!
FLATTERER
HEY, SWEETHEART CAN I GETCHA ANYTHING?
MAYBE IN A MINUTE SOON AS MY, ah, DAD COMES BACK
I'LL CHECK BACK!

HEY, WHERE'S YOUR MOMMY--?!
SLOW DOWN! I JUST WANNA
!
LET THAT KID GO RIGHT NOW
YOU!

FIRST PERSON WHO LAUGHS GETS SOCKED IN THE MOUTH
OH CASSIEEE...?
CISCO!
CASSIE ?!
STOP!

I SAID
SCREECH
STOP!
LET HER OUT OF THERE NOW!
...

TOUCH CROWN

SO

YOU GUYS DO YOUR OWN MAKE-UP?

OKAY YOU FELLAS WANNA GET YOUR CLOCKS CLEANED LOOKING LIKE THAT? FINE BY ME
WHO'S UP FIRST?
hupp-hupp
...HUZZA!
KRAK

=HURK=
BIFF
KUDD
Unnhh
POW!

HEY! HEY, MISTER! CAN YOU HEAR ME ?
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
WE THOUGHT IT WAS SOME KIND OF PUBLICITY STUNT, WHAT WITH THOSE CLOWNS !
WHERE D THEY GO ?
TOOK OFF DOWN STATE ROAD FIFTY EIGHT THERE IT'S ONLY BEEN A MINUTE OR TWO
YOU WANT US TO CALL THE COPS?
NO!
NO THANKS
I'M A COP MYSELF I'LL RADIO THIS IN SOON AS I'M IN PURSUIT
WHERE'S THIS ROAD LEAD, ANYHOW?
LOTSA PLACES BUT ROWLAD IS THE FIRST GOOD-SIZED TOWN WITH N TWENTY MILES.
NOT TO MENTION THERE'S A CIRCUS SET UP THERE THIS WEEK

DO YOU PEOPLE HAVE ANY IDEA WHO YOU'RE MESSING WITH?!
I'M CASSIE STARKWEATHER! I'M
YEAH YEAH YER WANTED IN THREE STATES FOR MURDER AN MAYHEM AN ALL THAT JAZZ
ONLY WE KNOW IT'S ALL MALARKEY, SO SPARE ME THE TOUGH GRL ACT WILLYA?
ILST FOLLOW WITH MY ASSOCIATES AN YA WON'T GET HURT
HUMAN SKELETON
GALINA
MADAME GALINA
THE FORTUNE TELLER

MISS STARKWEATHER! I AM GALINA WELCOME TO THE POTTERFIELD CIRCUS!
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT AND REMOVE YOUR, ah, DISGUISE
I'LL STAND
I INSIST, CASSANDRA
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU ARE AMONG FRIENDS HERE WE KNOW YOU ARE NOT THE KILLER THEY SAY YOU ARE ON THE NEWS
WE KNOW YOUR PROBLEMS STEM FROM YOUR GIFT OF SECOND SIGHT IT REVEALS CERTAIN UNPLEASANT TRUTHS THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD WOULD RATHER NOT ACCEPT
Oh, MY GOD YOU CAN SEE THEM, TOO ?! THE MONSTERS AND THE GHOSTS AND STUFF CAN'T YOU?
NOT ME THIS PSYCHIC FORTUNE TELLER FLIMFLAM IS JUST AN ACT
BUT THERE ARE TWO AMONG US WHO REALLY DO SHARE YOUR ABILITY
GIRLS? WON'T YOU COME OUT AND GREET OUR GUEST ?

Hi Ca see
Hee-hee
YOU'RE TELLING ME I'M
..KE THEM ?!
WELL, THAT FIGURES! THAT JUST FIGURES!
THERE, THERE
YOU'VE HURT THEIR FEELINGS, CASSANDRA AND WITHOUT EVEN BOTHERING TO FIND OUT IF THEY ARE WORTHY OF YOUR CONTEMPT

THE TWINS HAVE BEEN WITH THE CIRCUS SINCE LONG BEFORE I JOINED, BUT NO ONE IS SURE HOW LONG THEY'VE HAD SECOND SIGHT
THE CARNIES AND ROUSTABOUTS ONLY KNEW THAT IN CERTAIN TOWNS THE GIRLS SEEMED SCARED TO DEATH OF SOME OF THE LOCALS
WHEN I BROUGHT MY ACT TO POTTERFIELD, THE TWINS SORT OF ADOPTED ME
IN THEIR OWN WAY, THEY SPILLED THEIR SECRETS
AND I CAME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS THEY SAW
ONE DAY, ONE OF THE MONSTERS REALIZED THAT THE GIRLS KNEW WHAT IT REALLY WAS

THAT NIGHT LONG AFTER LIGHTS OUT IT CREPT INTO THE FAIRGROUNDS TO MAKE CERTAIN THEY WOULD NEVER REVEAL ITS SECRET
THE TWINS KNEW IT WOULD COME FOR THEM. WE HAD NEVER SEEN THEM SO AGITATED
WHICH IS WHY SO MANY OF US WERE THERE, WAITING UP WITH THEM. WE CIRCUS FOLK TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN
THAT NIGHT, WE ALL SAW FOR OURSELVES THE BEAST'S TRUE FACE
THAT NIGHT WE ALL SAW FOR OURSELVES THAT THE MONSTERS CAN ALSO BLEED AND DIE

EVERY ONE OF US HERE FEELS WE WERE *CALLED* TO LIFE IN A TRAVELING SHOW, BUT IT'S THE *TWINS* WHO GAVE US OUR *MISSION*
THESE *THINGS* WE FIGHT ARE *EVERYWHERE*, PASSING FOR HUMAN IN EVERY TOWN WE VISIT
THE GIRLS ARE OUR *MONSTER RADAR*, FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM
ONCE THE ENEMY IS IDENTIFIED, OTHERS PERFORM THE ACTUAL *EXTERMINATION*
SO HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW THEY'RE ALWAYS *DOCTORS*, OR AMBULANCE DRIVERS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
YES THOUGH WE'RE NOT SURE *WHY*
A FRIEND- *er* SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW HE GUESSED THEY PICK *JOBS* THAT GIVE THEM ACCESS TO *DYING* PEOPLE
SEE, THEY *STEAL* PEOPLE'S GHOSTS OR *SOULS*, OR WHATEVER, RIGHT AFTER THEY DIE BUT YOU GUYS ALREADY KNOW THIS *DON'T* YOU?
YOU DID WELL, GIRLS I THINK SHE *WILL* BE A GREAT HELP TO US
Huh? WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU *EXPECT* FROM ME?

THE GIRLS SENSED YOU OUT THERE SENSED YOU WERE A KINDRED SPIRIT, FIGHTING THE SAME SECRET WAR WE FIGHT
WE BROUGHT YOU HERE TO JOIN US
IT BEATS FIGHTING ALONE, DOESN'T IT?
WE'VE FOLLOWED YOUR STORY IN THE PAPERS JUDGING BY YOUR BODYCOUNT, YOU MUST BE ONE FIRST CLASS MONSTER HUNTER
BUT I DON'T WANT THIS WAR! I JUST WANT MY LIFE BACK!
I USED TO BE NORMAL, AND IF THE SO-CALLED GIFT IS WHAT ATTRACTS THE MONSTERS TO ME IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEN I WISH I'D NEVER GOTTEN IT!
GOD I MISS MY HOME I MISS MY PARENTS
Oh, GREAT THERE I GO AGAIN, MAKING EVERYONE AROUND ME MISERABLE
waaaah
waaahhh
IT'S OKAY CASSANDRA, WE UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL. WE CHOSE THIS FIGHT, BUT WE WOULD NOT FORCE IT ON ANYONE
NOT EVEN YOU
WE HAVE A PERFORMANCE IN AN HOUR OR SO AFTERWARD. WE'LL TAKE YOU TO A BUS STATION OR WHEREVER YOU WANT TO GO
BETTER JUST TAKE ME BACK TO THE DRIVE-IN THESE CLOWNS SNATCHED ME FROM

WELCOME
ROWLAD NURSING HOME
RESIDENTS & EMPLOYEES
" I WAS TRAVELING WITH A FRIEND AND HE'S PROBABLY WORRIED SICK
PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEATS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START!
DAMN STRAIGHT I S

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# Greetings From...

# THE POTTERFIELD CIRCUS

## NOW APPEARING! LIMITED ENGAGEMENT!

**The Potterfield Family Circus is coming to your town, delighting crowds with our prize-winning performances, then destroying the beasts who live among you disguised as your friends and neighbors.**

## LAST CHANCE! ONE NIGHT ONLY!

**Tonight, we present the one and only Big-Top performance by Public Enemy Number One:**

## CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER!

**She turned down our offer to join our traveling troup, but just wait until she sees us in action...**

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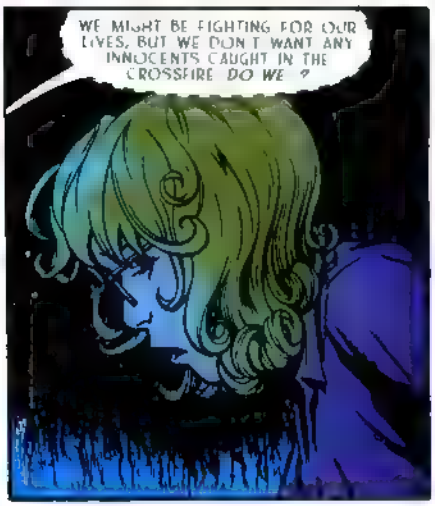
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS CASSIE? YOU DIDN'T SEEM SO KEEN ON JOINING US EARLIER
DIDN'T KNOW YOU'D PUT AN AMBUSH WHILE WAS HERE ARNOLPHO FIGURED OUGHTTA SEE YOU PEOPLE IN ACTION BEFORE TURNING YOU DOWN
JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO BE MUCH USE WHEN THE FUR STARTS FLYING
HEY WAS THAT SOME SORT OF CRACK ?
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AND CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

WILD BOY'S FUR IS JUST A GLAND CONDITION
I KNOW HE'S NOT ONE OF THEM IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN
IT NEVER BOTHERED ME UNTIL THOSE WOLFMEN STARTED COPPIN' MY LOOK
ANYHOW CASSIE, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE LET ME TELL YOU HOW WE RUN THINGS
I USED TO BE A SERGEANT ARMY RECON I SEE OUR LITTLE SQUAD LIKE A PLATOON
"THE TWINS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN TELL THE ENEMY APART FROM NORMAL PEOPLE THEY'RE OUR RADAR
"THEY STAY IN GALINA'S TRAILER, WHERE IT'S SAFE
"GALINA'S OUR GENERAL ONCE THE GIRLS POINT OUT THE BOGEY MEN SHE WORKS OUT OUR STRATEGY
"SHE USUALLY CONTACTS THEIR WORKPLACE AND INVITES THEM TO ATTEND A PERFORMANCE AS VIP'S
"THAT'S THE DRILL TONIGHT SHE'LL LEAD THEM INTO THE AMBUSH HERSELF
"I TELL YA I'M GLAD THE TOUGH OLD BROAD'S ON OUR SIDE "

OUR SYSTEM'S WORKED *SO FAR*, BUT WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS LACKED WAS A *LIEUTENANT* FOR OUR PLATOON. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
NOT EXACTLY
SOMEONE WHO CAN SHIFT TACTICS *ON THE SPOT*, IN CASE THE MISSION'S A TOTAL *SNAFU*
Um. THAT'S MILITARY SLANG FOR
I *KNOW* THAT ONE

RIGHT
MY POINT IS, WE TAKE OUT WHOEVER THE TWINS *PICK* BUT THEY STILL LOOK *HUMAN* TO US
*YOU*, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN SEE THROUGH THEIR DISGUISE JUST LIKE THE TWINS CAN
YOU COULD *BE THERE* TO MAKE SURE WE *NEVER* TAKE DOWN THE WRONG PERSON


WE MIGHT BE FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES, BUT WE DON'T WANT ANY INNOCENTS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. *DO WE*?

*PSSST* WE'RE HERE
THIS CORRAL WILL BE OUR *KILL BOX*. GALINA WILL LEAD THE SENIOR STAFF OF THE *ROWLAD NURSING HOME* INTO IT
THE GIRLS SAY *ALL FOUR* OF THEM ARE WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING
YOU JUST WATCH AND LEARN

"ARNOLPHO, WHAT ABOUT MY FRIEND CISCO? THE GUY YOUR CLOWNS BEAT UP WHEN THEY SNATCHED ME OFF THE STREET?
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE TUMBLING TRAMPS!
"HE'LL BE WONDERING IF I'M SAFE HE MIGHT EVEN BE LOOKING FOR ME."
AND NOW THE FLYING FRANKLINS WILL PERFORM ON TRAPEZE, TO THE PATRIOTIC STRAINS OF A MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO EMPYREAN!
TA-TA-TA-UMPA-UMPA-
I TRUST YOUR RESIDENTS ARE ENJOYING THE SHOW?

DEE-DEE-DAAA
IMMENSELY USUALLY, THE BIGGEST THRILL THEY GET AT THE NURSING HOME IS WHEN WE THROW SOME RAISINS IN THE TAPIOCA
THIS HAS BEEN A REAL TREAT FOR US OUR ONLY CONCERN NOW IS THAT THE AFTER SHOW RECEPTION IS ACCESSIBLE TO OUR HANDICAPPED RESIDENTS
PRECISELY WHAT I WANTED TO INSPECT OUT HERE
JUST FOLLOW ME TO THE RECEPTION TENT YOU CAN LET ME KNOW IF ANYTHING IS AMISS
PA-PA-PA-
"ONCE SHE LEADS THEM INTO THE WAGON RING, WE CUT OFF THE EXIT AND HIT THEM"
SHORTRUSE DON'T YOU FIRE THAT THING UNLESS WE'RE REALLY ON THE ROPES
YEAH YEAH SARGE
CHAK
WE'LL TRY TO TIME THIS SO THE BAND UNDER THE BIG TOP IS PLAYING LOUD WHEN WE STRIKE ANY LUCK NO ONE WILL OVERHEAR A THING

SO, YOU'RE THE FORTUNE TELLER? DOES THAT MEAN YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF MENTAL POWERS OR SOMETHING?
Er SOMETHING LIKE THAT
AND DO YOU EVER HAVE, WHADDAYA CALL THEM ..PREMONITIONS?
LIKE WARNINGS THAT SOMETHING BAD IS GOING TO HAPPEN?
NOT REALLY WHY DO YOU ASK, MISTER FOX?
PLEASE, CALL ME CORKY
SWOOSH
I WAS JUST THINKING, GALINA, HOW IT'S GOOD TO HAVE SOME WARNING WHEN SOMETHING WICKED COMES YOUR WAY AND IT DOESN'T ALWAYS TAKE MAGIC POWERS.
SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES IS FINDING OUT THAT YOUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES HAVE GONE MISSING AFTER A CERTAIN CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN
I
WHAT, YOU DIDN'T THINK WE ALL KEPT TABS ON EACH OTHER?
HOW LONG DID YOU EXPECT YOU COULD PLAY US FOR FOOLS?

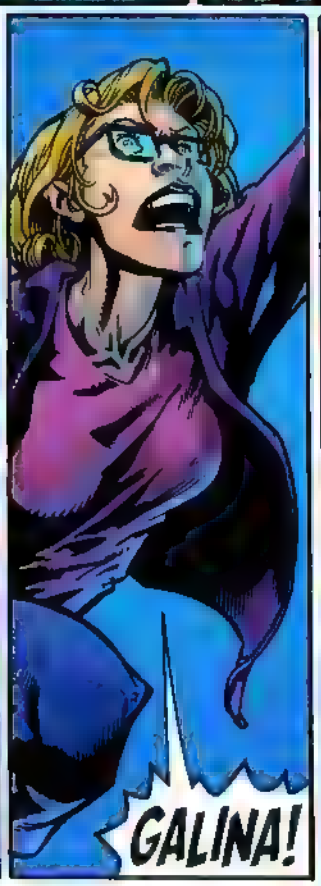
TADDA-TA-TA-TA-TA
TADDA-TA-TA-TA-TA
A-TA-TA-TA-TADDA-TA-TA-TA-TA
UMPA-UM-PA-PA-PA
UMPA-UM-PA-PA
THEY KNOW! THEY KNOW!
RA-PA-TA-TA-YATTA-TA
SHOWTIME!

OP-POOP-PEDOOPEEDOO-
POOP-POOP-PEEP-PEEP

MADRE DE DIOS NOW I'VE SEEN IT ALL !

RAHR!

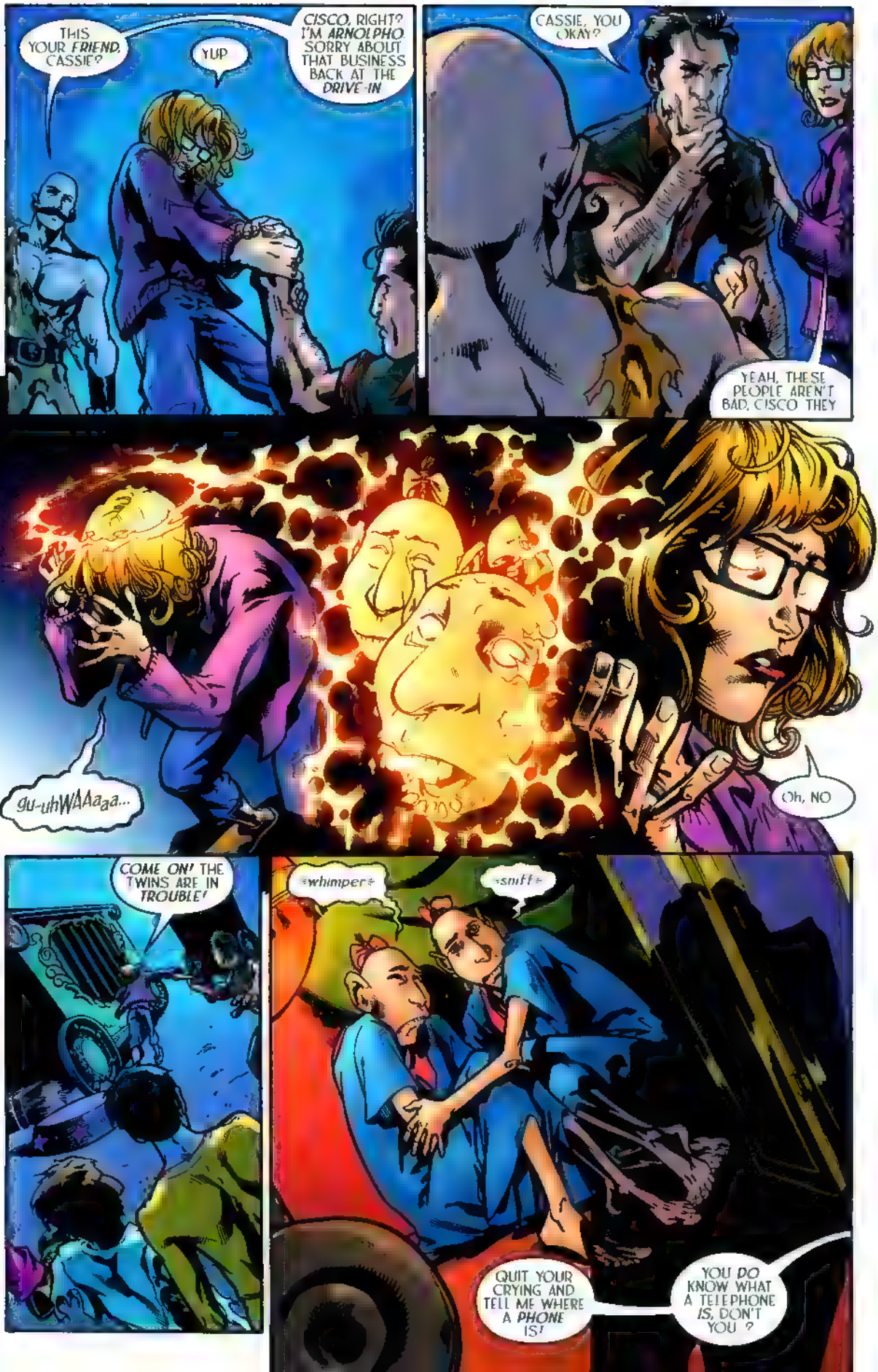
NOT SO FAST
=akk=


GALINA!

?
=whung=

aw, no
splut
CASSIE STARKWEATHER ! WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU
=hk=
=hnk=
MERCIFESS HELL
THAT BLOUSE COST ME FIFTY DOLLARS!
=unh=
BLAM

SNAFU YOU, LADY
=GASP=
THAT'S THREE OF THEM DOWN! WHERE'S THE OTHER ONE?
C'MON C'MON A BIKE A PAY PHONE A
HIDING PLACE


THIS YOUR FRIEND, CASSIE?
YUP
CISCO, RIGHT? I'M ARNOLPHO. SORRY ABOUT THAT BUSINESS BACK AT THE DRIVE-IN
CASSIE, YOU OKAY?
YEAH, THESE PEOPLE AREN'T BAD, CISCO THEY
gu-uhWAAaaa...
Oh, NO
COME ON! THE TWINS ARE IN TROUBLE!
=whimper=
=sniff=
QUIT YOUR CRYING AND TELL ME WHERE A PHONE IS!
YOU DO KNOW WHAT A TELEPHONE IS, DON'T YOU ?

Bwaaaa -!
GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SHUT YOU UP
HOLD IT!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
<unk>!
CISCO!
HOLY
SO YOU'RE STARKWEATHER? NOT QUITE THE KILLING MACHINE THEY'VE MADE YOU OUT TO BE
GIRLS PLEASE GET OUT!

=akk=
...
THUMP
CASSIE! ARE THEY ? ARE YOU--?
YES, WE'RE OKAY
THE GIRLS SAVED US THEY
I'M NOT SURE WHAT THEY DID
Ca-seee
Thank you, Ca-seee
NICE WORK, LIEUTENANT STARKWEATHER
GIRLS ?

SHE SAVED *MADAME GALINA!* SHE SAVED *THE TWINS*, AND SHE'S *CUTE*, TO BOOT!

Oh, *STOP!*

ANYWAY THE GIRLS SAVED *THEMSELVES DIDN'T YOU*, GIRLS?

*Giggle*

LANCE CORPORAL THIRD INFANTRY *YOU ?*

PETTY OFFICER, SOUTHWEST CARRIER FLEET

A *SQUID?!* NO WONDER YOU PUNCH LIKE A GRL -!

WHAT DID THEY *DO* TO HIM, ANYWAY? I MEAN HE *IS* STILL ALIVE ?

Ah, YES THE OLD *BRAIN ERASER*

THE *WHAT?*

THE GIRLS HAVE A FEW *MORE* WEAPONS IN THEIR *PSYCHIC ARSENAL* THAN YOU HAVE IN *YOURS*, CASSANDRA

BUT WHAT THEY *REFUSE* TO DO IS USE THEM TO *KILL*

INSTEAD, THEY CAN MAKE A PERSON--OR A MONSTER--*FORGET* CERTAIN THINGS. *FOREVER*

THEY MADE *THIS* BLOOD SUCKER FORGET HE *IS* A BLOOD SUCKER

MOST OF US WOULD JUST AS SOON *WASTE* HIM BUT THAT WOULD UPSET THE TWINS, SO WE TELL OL' CORKY HE'S SOMEBODY *USEFUL*, AND PUT HIM TO *WORK*

WHAP

WE *ALREADY* HAVE TWO OR THREE OF THEM WORKING AS *ROUSTABOUTS*

BUT WE'RE NOT REALLY TRYING TO *ADD* TO THE COLLECTION

YEAH! WE'D MUCH RATHER RECRUIT ON-THE-LAM *CUTIES* WHO KICK MAJOR *MONSTER-TAIL!*

HOW *ABOUT IT*, CASSIE? WON'T YOU *RECONSIDER* OUR INVITATION?

HECK, WE'LL EVEN TAKE YOUR *UNCLE* HERE! *GOOD MAN*-HANDY WITH A *TENT PEG!*

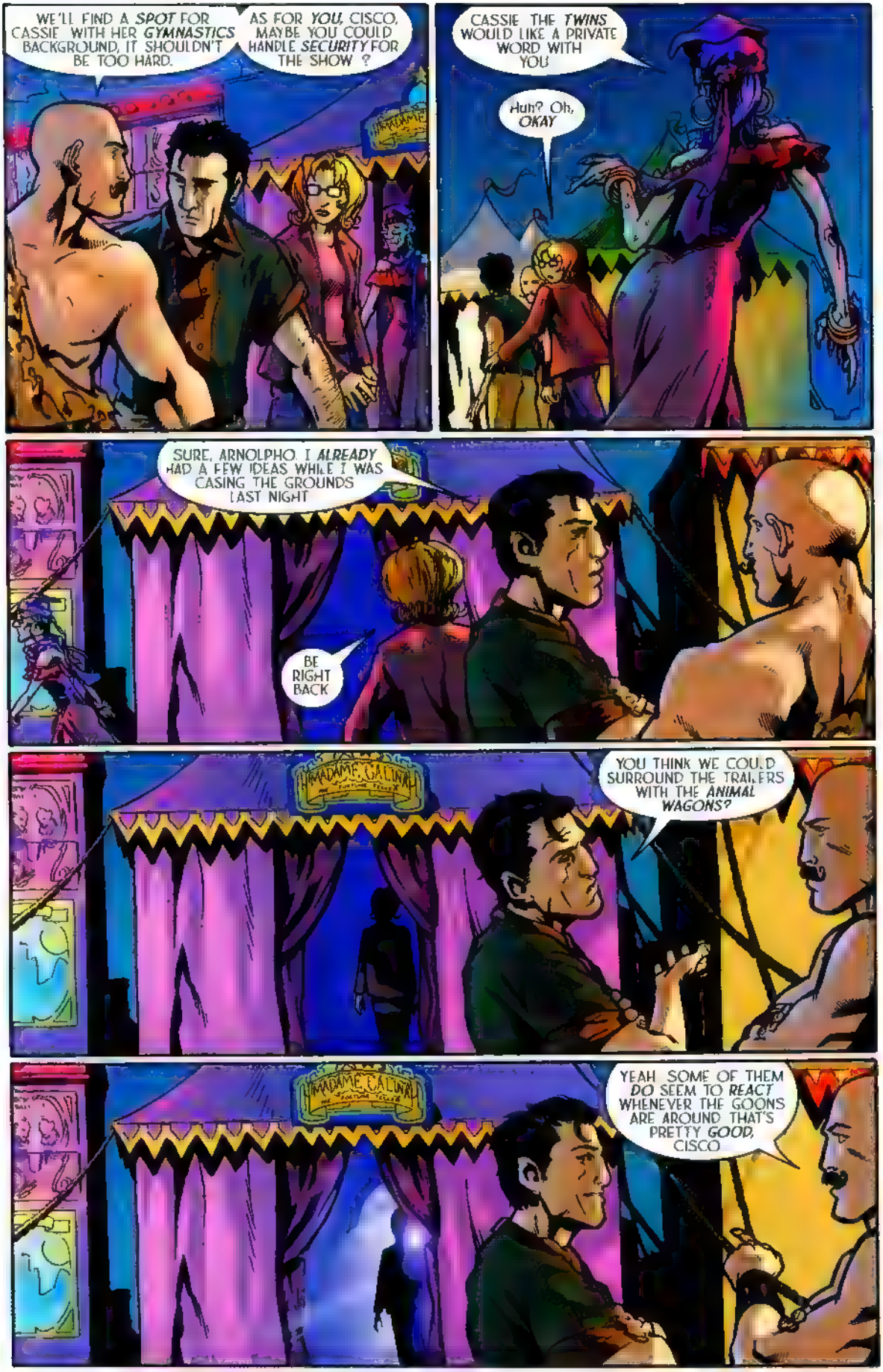
HAHAHA HAHA!

WELL I GUESS AT *SOME* POINT IN THEIR LIVES, *EVERYONE* DREAMS OF JOINING THE CIRCUS

CISCO? PLEASE SAY YOU'LL STAY *TOO ?*

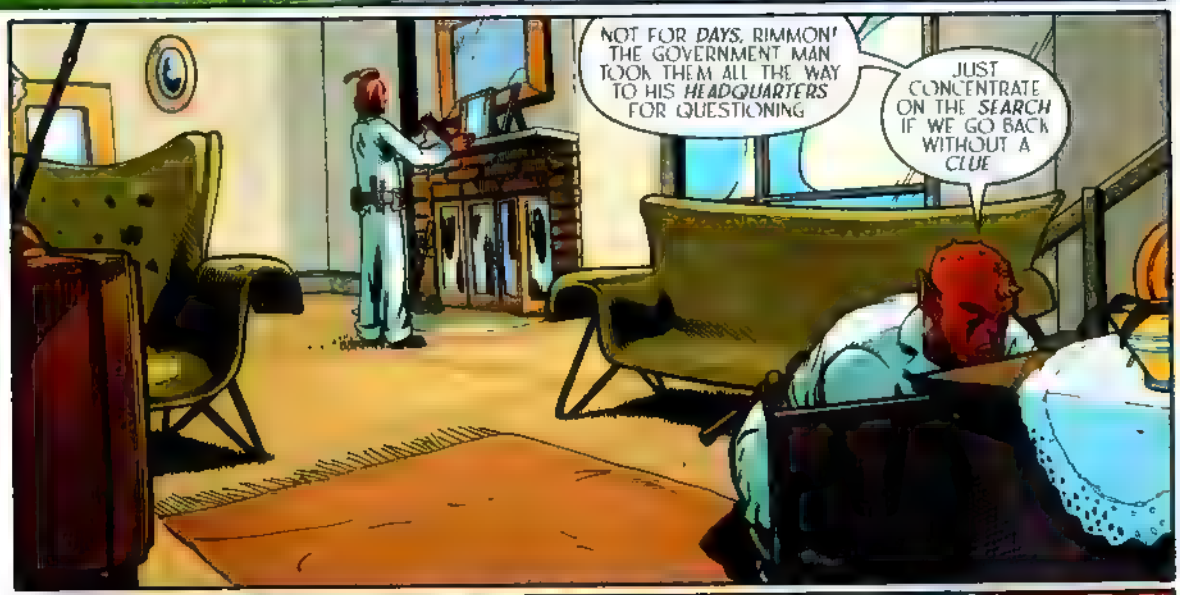
STEP RIGHT THIS WAY TO SEE THE INCREDIBLE THE ASTOUNDING CORKY THE GASTRONOMICALLY GRANDIOSE GEEK!
THE GEEK
SEE FOR YOURSELF AS HE DEVOURS A LIVE CHICKEN WHOLE BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES!
THE GEEK
UGH!
OOO!
FEP!
YUCK!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

I WAS A NOBODY BEFORE I CAME HERE. I WAS NEVER HONESTLY GOOD AT ANYTHING
GEEK
EVEN MY CRYSTAL BALL ROUTINE IS A SHAM
THEN I MET YOU TWO
YOU CHOSE ME TO SPEAK FOR YOU YOU MADE ME SPECIAL
SO, CAN YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I HAVE TO, WHY I MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE THREATENED BY YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND ?
...
NO. OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T
NEVER MIND I'M JUST A SILLY OLD MAID FEELING SORRY FOR HERSELF
I JUST
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU HOW YOU CAN MAKE CASSIE TRULY HAPPY
REMEMBER HOW SAD CASSIE WAS WHEN WE MET HER?
REMEMBER WHAT SHE SAID? HOW SHE WISHED SHE'D NEVER HAD THE GIFT OF SECOND-SIGHT? HOW MUCH SHE MISSES HER PARENTS ?
Yes
Cassie sad.
I KNOW WE'D LOVE TO KEEP HER WITH US FOREVER
BUT DON'T YOU THINK SHE MIGHT BE HAPPIER IF SHE FORGOT ALL ABOUT THIS WAR OF OURS, AND RETURNED TO THE LIFE SHE REALLY WANTS?


WE'LL FIND A SPOT FOR CASSIE WITH HER GYMNASTICS BACKGROUND, IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD.
AS FOR YOU, CISCO, MAYBE YOU COULD HANDLE SECURITY FOR THE SHOW ?
CASSIE THE TWINS WOULD LIKE A PRIVATE WORD WITH YOU
Huh? Oh, OKAY
SURE, ARNOLPHO. I ALREADY HAD A FEW IDEAS WHILE I WAS CASING THE GROUNDS LAST NIGHT
BE RIGHT BACK
MADAME CALIVA
YOU THINK WE COULD SURROUND THE TRAILERS WITH THE ANIMAL WAGONS?
MADAME CALIVA
YEAH. SOME OF THEM DO SEEM TO REACT WHENEVER THE GOONS ARE AROUND. THAT'S PRETTY GOOD, CISCO.

THANKS, PAL I SAW SOME PARTISANS IN CADMIA DO SOMETHING SIMILAR DURING THE WAR
Oh, HEY, CASSIE, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THAT WAS ALL *ABOUT?* OR IS IT *"PSYCHIC GIRLS ONLY"?*
CASSIE ?
MADAME GIOVANNI
THE FORTUNE TELLER
YOU GIRLS KNOW WHAT'S UP WITH *CASSIE?*
We give her a present.
Yeah a good present giggle-

HOW LONG TILL THEY COME BACK ?


NOT FOR DAYS, RIMMON! THE GOVERNMENT MAN TOOK THEM ALL THE WAY TO HIS HEADQUARTERS FOR QUESTIONING
JUST CONCENTRATE ON THE SEARCH IF WE GO BACK WITHOUT A CLUE

DON'T REMIND ME
AND JUST WHAT IN THE PLANE OF PAIN DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND UP IN THERE?

HEY, THERE COULD BE BURNT OFFERINGS BLOOD SACRIFICES I DON'T KNOW--
--SOMETHING TO ACCOUNT FOR HER POWERS !
DON'T BE AN IDIOT! IF THAT'S HOW SHE GOT THE SIGHT, THEN SHE'D BE WORKING FOR OUR SIDE!

FINE, MANTUS YOU GOT ANY BETTER THEORIES?!
OR MAYBE WE SHOULD ASK THE TRAIL OF VICTIMS SHE LEAVES WHEREVER SHE GOES!
MAYBE I SHOULD TELL THE ADVERSARY THAT YOU'RE TOO SCARED OF A MORTAL GIRL TO CARRY OUT HIS

DING DONG
I THOUGHT YOU SAID THEY WEREN'T DUE BACK YET!
THAT'S NOT THE STARKWEATHERS, IDIOT! THEY WOULDN'T RING THEIR OWN DOORBELL-- THEY'D COME RIGHT IN!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
RELAX, PARTNER WE'LL JUST TELL WHOEVER IT IS TO GET LOST
ALL RIGHT BUT YOU BE THE FEMALE
FORGET IT, RIMMON
I WEAR THE PANTS IN THIS HOUSEHOLD
DING DONG
DING DONG
HOLD YOUR HORSES! WE'RE COMING!

MOM! DAD! IT'S BEEN AGES!
SINCE WHEN DID WE START *LOCKING* *DOORS* AROUND HERE ?

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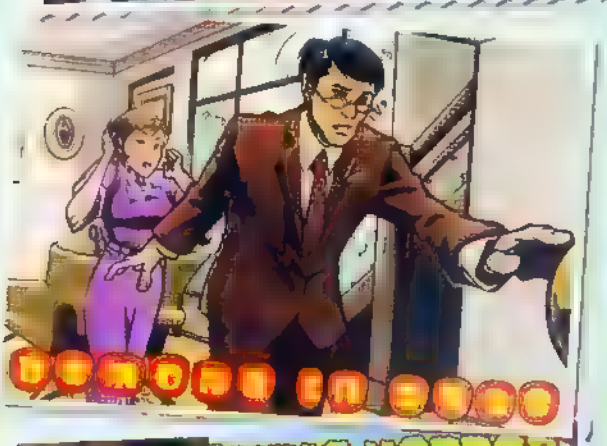
# Greetings From... PLAINSVILLE

## HOME OF WELKIN STATE UNIVERSITY



**FIELD OPERATIVE REPORT**

To: Chairwoman Byleth

Cc: Board of Directors, Harlequin Healthcare

From: Mantus & Rimmon

Re: Cassandra Starkweather

Date: May 21

NOTE: my partner, Rimmon, insists on not reporting until we have some tangible results. However, since we may not survive this mission, I want some written record of what happened here.

As ordered, we entered the Starkweather household to search for the source of Cassie's "psychic" abilities, and were surprised by the arrival of the subject herself. Rimmon and I had assumed the appearance of Starkweather's parents (I impersonating the father, Rimmon the mother), and we expected Cassie to expose us as impostors immediately.

Instead, she acts as if we really are her parents, evincing no second-sight ability whatsoever. Considering how many other Perdition operatives have died at her hands, we assume that she is playing mind-games on us. We continue monitoring for any sign of her special powers, but I am beginning to wonder if something really did blind her to our true nature.

Should this message reach you in the event of my untimely death, please know that I did not wish to withhold information from you. I only hope I can report the final outcome of our mission to you in person.

Yours in the Brimstone Bond,

Mantus

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MOM!?
HOW MUCH LONGER?
ALMOST READY
GIANT RONS
WORKS IN MINUTES!
DRAIN CLEAN
CLOG REMOVER

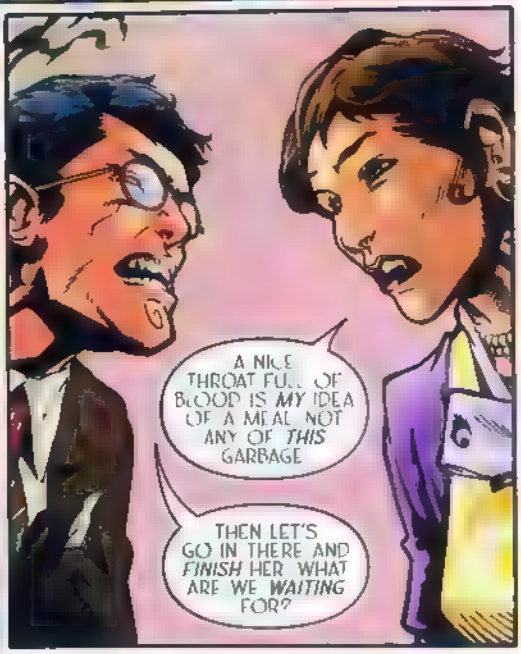
SHOULDN'T YOU *um* *WASH* THE TABLE OR SOMETHING ?
SURE MOM! AND WHEN WE'RE DONE WE CAN *SET* THE DISHES RIGHT ?
DA AD ! THAT'S MY PIECE!
IF YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOOD TO PLAY JUST *SAY* SO!
AND WHEN ARE YOU GONNA *LIGHT* THAT THING ANYWAY? YOU WAIT ANY LONGER AND IT'LL BE TIME TO *EAT*
Er WELL YOU SEE
*EXCUSE* ME A MINUTE CASSIE I'M GOING TO CHECK ON YOUR *MOTHER*

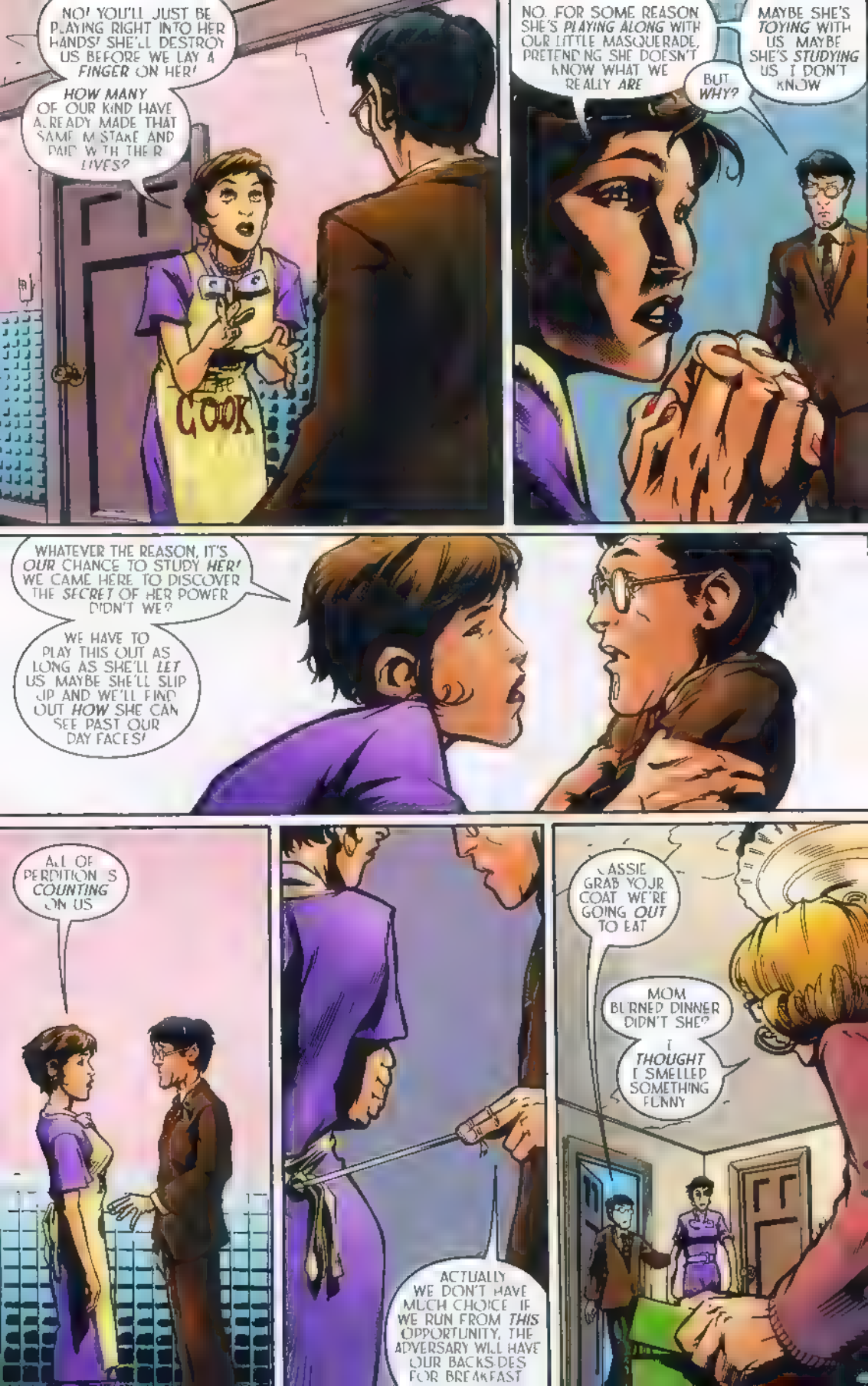
WHAT IS TAKING YOU SO LONG? I'M ALL ALONE OUT THERE!
FINE! LET'S TRADE! SEE IF YOU CAN FIGURE OUT HOW THE CATTLE FIX THEIR MEALS -!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!
I DON'T KNOW. I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY DONE THIS!
BLEACH

I JUST WENT THROUGH THE CABINETS AND THREW EVERYTHING IN TO SEE HOW IT ALL GOES TOGETHER
YOU MIGHT'VE SLOWED DOWN TO READ A LABEL OR TWO
KISS the COOK

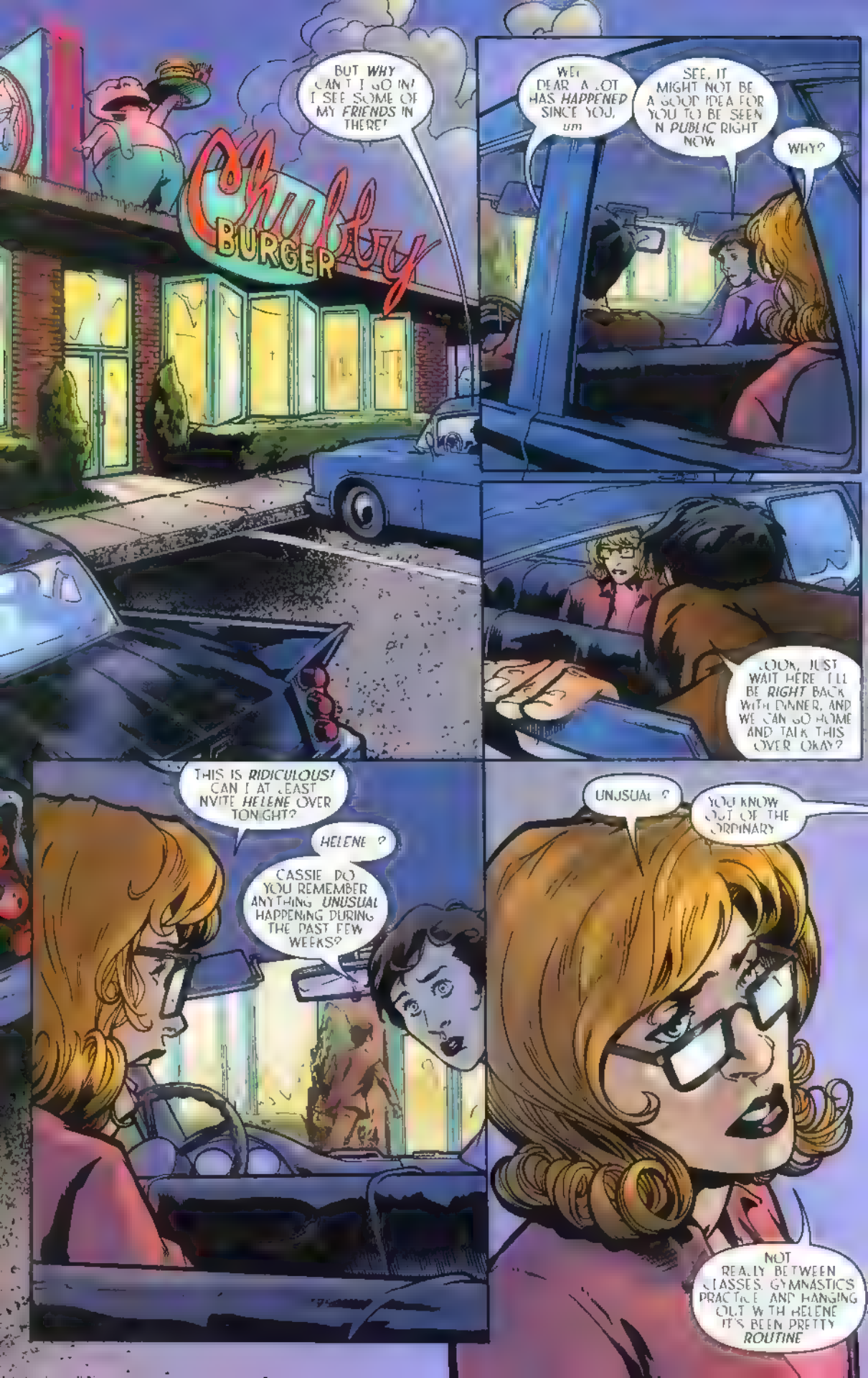
THIS STUFF WOULD KILL US ALL!
DON'T YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT'S EDIBLE AND WHAT'S NOT?


A NICE THROAT FULL OF BLOOD IS MY IDEA OF A MEAL NOT ANY OF THIS GARBAGE
THEN LET'S GO IN THERE AND FINISH HER. WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?


NO! YOU'LL JUST BE PLAYING RIGHT INTO HER HANDS! SHE'LL DESTROY US BEFORE WE LAY A *FINGER* ON HER!
*HOW MANY* OF OUR KIND HAVE ALREADY MADE THAT SAME MISTAKE AND PAID WITH THEIR *LIVES*?
COOK
NO. FOR SOME REASON SHE'S *PLAYING ALONG* WITH OUR LITTLE MASQUERADE, PRETENDING SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT WE REALLY *ARE*
BUT *WHY*?
MAYBE SHE'S *TOYING* WITH US. MAYBE SHE'S *STUDYING* US. I DON'T KNOW
WHATEVER THE REASON, IT'S *OUR* CHANCE TO STUDY *HER*! WE CAME HERE TO DISCOVER THE *SECRET* OF HER POWER. DIDN'T WE?
WE HAVE TO PLAY THIS OUT AS LONG AS SHE'LL *LET* US. MAYBE SHE'LL SLIP UP AND WE'LL FIND OUT *HOW* SHE CAN SEE PAST OUR DAY FACES!
ALL OF PERDITION'S *COUNTING* ON US
ACTUALLY WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE. IF WE RUN FROM *THIS* OPPORTUNITY, THE ADVERSARY WILL HAVE OUR BACKSIDES FOR BREAKFAST.
JASSIE, GRAB YOUR COAT. WE'RE GOING *OUT* TO EAT.
MOM BURNED DINNER, DIDN'T SHE?
I *THOUGHT* I SMELLED SOMETHING FUNNY.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHAT SHE DID WHEN SHE WAS SIX YEARS OLD?
MY DAUGHTER IS NOT A PSYCHO!
SHE COULDN'T HAVE DONE THESE THINGS YOU ACCUSE HER OF! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
I'M JUST TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR DAUGHTER THINKS. SO WE CAN FIND HER BEFORE SHE HURTS ANYONE ELSE
NOW, HOW OLD WAS SHE WHEN SHE STOPPED ENCOUNTERING HER "GHOSTS"?
WHEN CAN I SEE MY WIFE? WHERE HAVE YOU PEOPLE TAKEN HER?!
THE SOONER YOU COOPERATE, THE SOONER YOU AND MISSUS STANLEY-WEATHER CAN GO HOME
SO BACK TO HER SUPERNATURAL CLAIMS
I TOLD YOU THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME! THESE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING TO KNOW!
SHE'S NOT GUILTY DIRECTOR PURVIS CALL THIS WITCH HUNT OFF BEFORE IT ENDS UP EMBARRASSING THE BUREAU!

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK ABOUT MAKIN THE BUREAU LOOK BAD!
YOU ACTUALLY HAD THE GIRL IN CUFFS, YET SOMEHOW YOU END UP EMPTY HANDED AND STRAPPED TO A MEN'S ROOM CRAPPER!
WHY DID I EVEN LET YOU BACK IN HERE?
PROBABLY TO SHUT ME UP. TO BE PRETTY INCONVENIENT IF PEOPLE FOUND OUT ABOUT THAT BOGUS PRISONER TRANSPORT TEAM YOU SENT
ONE MORE WORD AND I SWEAR YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF YOUR DAYS BEHIND BARS!
FOR WHAT?
PLENTY OF FOLKS IN THE S AMMER FOR NOTHIN GUNNAR YOU KNOW THAT NOW SCRAM
5
WE KNOW SHE MUST'VE MADE CONTACT! WHERE IS SHE?!
5
I DON'T KNOW =A HUH= I DON'T KNOW =SOB=


BUT WHY CAN'T I GO IN? I SEE SOME OF MY FRIENDS IN THERE!
Chubby BURGER
WELL DEAR A LOT HAS HAPPENED SINCE YOU, um
SEE, IT MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD IDEA FOR YOU TO BE SEEN IN PUBLIC RIGHT NOW
WHY?
SOON, JUST WAIT HERE I'LL BE RIGHT BACK WITH DINNER, AND WE CAN GO HOME AND TALK THIS OVER OKAY?
THIS IS RIDICULOUS! CAN I AT LEAST INVITE HELENE OVER TONIGHT?
HELENE ?
CASSIE DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING UNUSUAL HAPPENING DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS?
UNUSUAL ?
YOU KNOW OUT OF THE ORDINARY
NOT REALLY BETWEEN CLASSES GYMNASTICS PRACTICE AND HANGING OUT WITH HELENE IT'S BEEN PRETTY ROUTINE

-Anem- MISTER STARKWEATHER ?
YES?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME DO YOU? CONNIE BINGHAM I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL WITH YOUR DAUGHTER
I JUST WANTED TO SAY HOW SORRY WE ALL ARE TO HEAR ABOUT YOU KNOW ALL THIS JUNK WITH CASSIE
SO AS FAR AS YOU KNOW HELENE IS DOING WELL ?
WHAT? YOU MEAN GRADES WISE? YEAH SHE'S JUST FINE
OH MY GOD! THAT'S CONNIE!
I KNOW THIS MUST BE HARD FOR YOU AND MISSUS STARKWEATHER BUT SO SHOULDN'T an BLAME YOURSELVES FOR ANYTHING SHE DID
THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU BUT I REALLY HAVE TO GO

CONNIE BINGHAM!
WHAT'S SHAKIN'? YOU GUYS GOING TO THE MOVIES LATER?




WELL WE REALLY GOTTA RUN NOW! BE SEEIN YA!
HEY!

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO KEEP HER IN THE CAR?!
NO, YOU DIDN'T! BUT I TRIED ANYWAY
DAD!

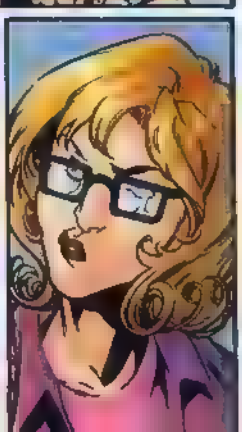
WE JUST GOT A CALL FROM THE PLAINSVILLE POLICE SOMEBODY REPORTED SEEING STARKWEATHER AT A LOCAL CHUBBY BURGER LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO!
I KNEW SHE'D TRY TO GO HOME SOONER OR LATER
DIRECTOR PURVIS PLEASE DON'T LET THE LOCAL COPS GUN HER DOWN! WE NEED TO TALK TO HER
PUT TWO AGENTS ON THE HOUSE IMMEDIATELY BUT THEY ARE NOT TO MOVE IN UNTIL I SAY SO! GOT IT?
YES, SIR. EXCEPT THERE'S ONE ODD THING ABOUT THE TIP WE GOT
THE WITNESS SAID SHE WAS THERE WITH HER MOM AND DAD
NOW THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT, CAN IT?

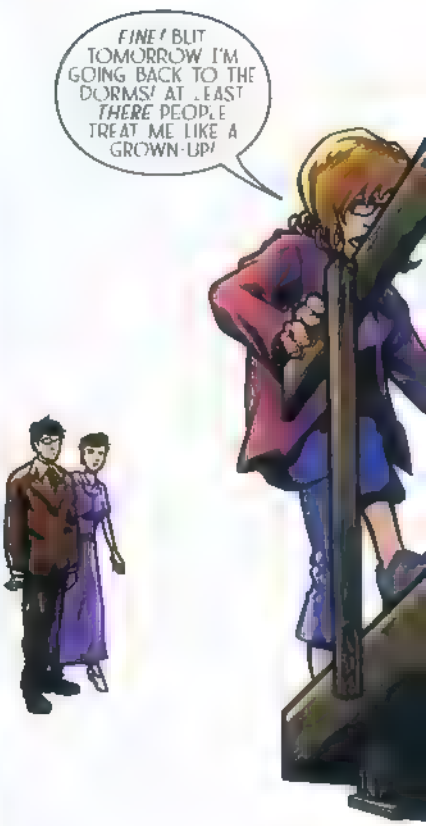
GOD, DAD--! YOU JUST ABOUT EMBARRASSED ME TO *DEATH!*

YOU WERE SO *RUDE!* WORSE YOU MADE *ME* LOOK RUDE! I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO SAY *GOOD-BYE* TO MY FRIENDS
CASSIE, I
AND NOW YOU TELL ME I CAN'T GO *OUT?* WHAT, AM I *TEN YEARS OLD* HERE?!

YOUNG LADY, YOU WILL SHOW US SOME *RESPECT* AS LONG AS YOU ARE UNDER THIS ROOF!
NOW *GO* TO YOUR ROOM!

YOU'RE *GROUNDED!*
!




*FINE!* BUT TOMORROW I'M GOING BACK TO THE DORMS! AT LEAST *THERE* PEOPLE TREAT ME LIKE A GROWN-UP!

"YOU'RE GROUNDED" ? WHERE DID *THAT* COME FROM?
I DON'T KNOW I'VE BEEN STUDYING THEIR *SIT-COMS* IT'S SOMETHING *FATHER-FIGURES* SAY A LOT
WE CAN'T KEEP UP THIS CHARADE FOREVER
YOU GOT A *BETTER* IDEA ?
WE GIVE HER A FEW MINUTES, THEN I GO UP THERE AND *KILL* HER IN HER SLEEP
WHAT HAPPENED TO *WAIT AND SEE*?
WHAT HAPPENED TO WATCHING FOR CLUES ABOUT HER *SECOND SIGHT*? IT'S WHAT THE ADVERSARY WOULD WANT
THAT GIRL IS STRINGING US ALONG, AND WE WILL *DIE* TRYING TO DO WHAT THE ADVERSARY WANTS--!
KILLING HER WOULD BE AN ACT OF *SELF-DEFENSE!* SURELY, THE BOSS WOULD *AGREE*
OH, YEAH HIS INFERNAL MAJESTY WOULD *DEFINITELY* PUT OUR SAFETY AHEAD OF HIS NEEDS

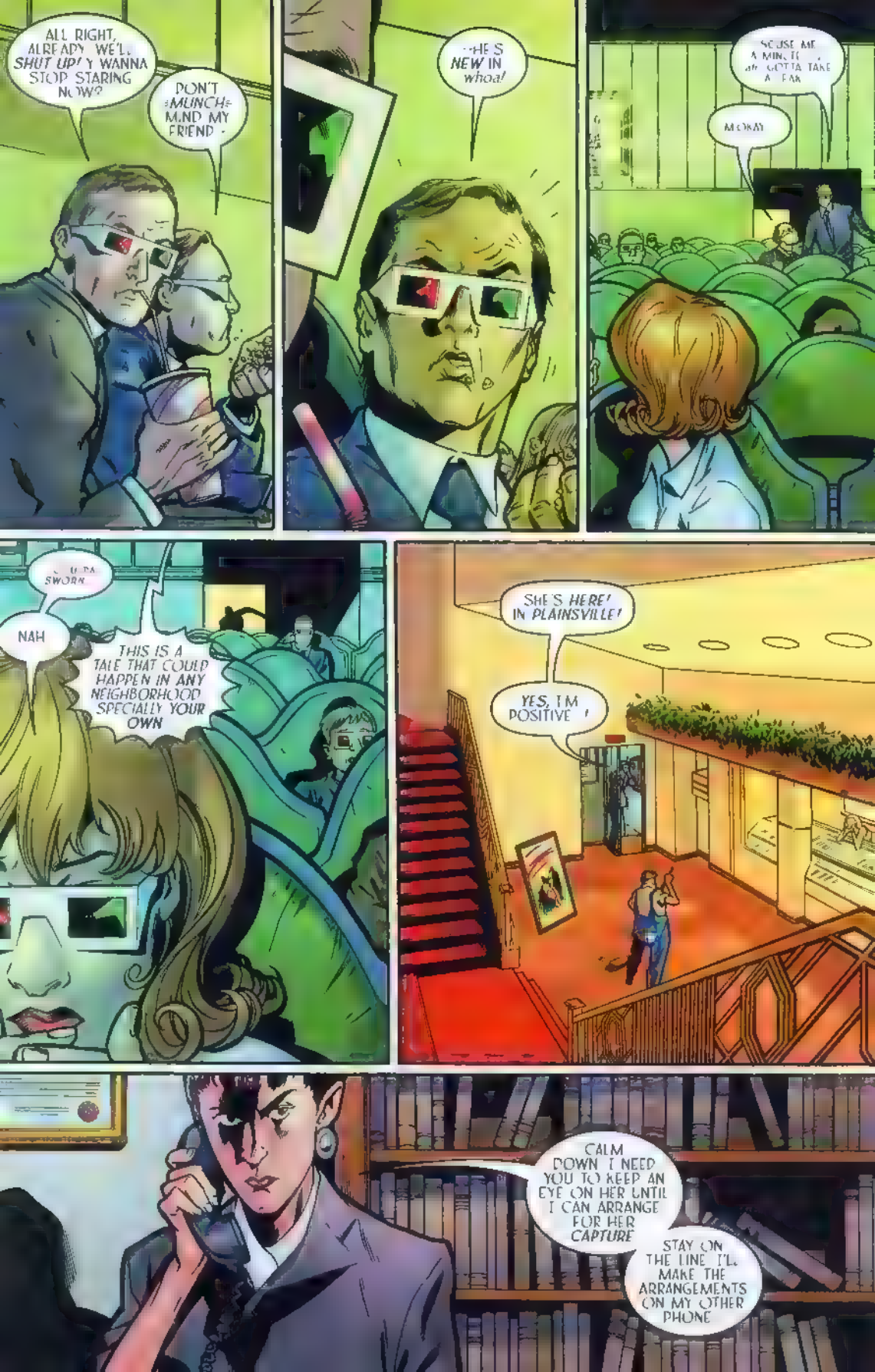
COME ON MANTUS! THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO PLAY THIS, AND THAT'S PATIENTLY IF WE TRY TO KILL HER, THAT GIRL WILL CERTAINLY BE A STEP AHEAD OF US
LET'S AT LEAST REPORT TO PERDITION AND TELL THEM SHE'S *HERE*
AND END UP WITH NONE OF THE *CREDIT* WHEN SHE'S FINALLY BROUGHT IN?

I AM THROUGH WITH "WAIT AND SEE" RAMMON THE TIME HAS COME FOR ACTION
NO! SHE I JUST KILL YOU AND THEN COME AFTER M
ONE MORE WORD AND I'LL GET YOU RIGHT HERE
JUST BE
blvd.
KEE OU
Klik
GREEEEE
ASSIE
blvd

WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU WERE RIGHT SHE IS ONE STEP AHEAD OF US
SHE SNUCK OUT
SHE MUST HAVE KNOWN YOU'D TRY SOMETHING
MORE LIKELY, SHE'S GONE HUNTING
LET'S JUST ah WAIT HERE 'TIL SHE COMES HOME ACT LIKE WE NEVER KNEW SHE LEFT
Y'KNOW WAIT AND SEE
"...I JUST HOPE NONE OF OUR KIND RUN INTO HER OUT THERE."

A LITTLE MORE TO THE RIGHT
THERE THAT'S PERFECT!
THIS IS GONNA TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO
EVERY ROOKIE HAS HIS SETTLING IN PERIOD. IT'LL BECOME SECOND NATURE ONCE YOU'VE BEEN HERE AWHILE
I ALWAYS FOUND THAT LOOKING LIKE ONE OF THEM IS A BREEZE COMPARED TO UNDERSTANDING HOW THEY THINK!
PLAINSVILLE
THE GHOUL NEXT DOOR IN 3-D
THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO RESEARCH THE POPULAR MYTHOLOGY
TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY FEAR
EXACTLY
JUST MAKE SURE IT'S A MONSTER MOVIE BEFORE YOU GO. I ONCE WENT TO SEE SOMETHING CALLED "SWEET MURDER"
TURNED OUT TO BE A FREAKIN' MUSICAL!
SCARY

EMPYREAN PICTURES PRESENTS:
THE GHOUL NEXT DOOR IN 3-D!
A LOT OF THESE FILMS ARE JUST AN ALLEGORY FOR THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION
EAN PICTURES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
YOU KNOW THE WHOLE FEAR OF COMMUNIST INFILTRATION?
UM I'M STILL READING UP ON ALL THAT
SHHH!
BOTTOM LINE THEY'RE AFRAID THAT AGENTS FROM RODINA ARE SECRETLY LIVING IN EMPYREAN TO UNDERMINE THEIR SO-CALLED DEMOCRACY
THAT'S FUNNY NOT TO MENTION IRONIC, CONSIDERING
SHHH!
YUP BUT AS LONG AS THEY'RE MORE SCARED OF EACH OTHER THAN THEY ARE OF WELL YOU KNOW
!
SHHH!
ANYHOW, I JUST HOPE THIS "GHOUL" IS VISUALLY INTERESTING
I'M GETTING TIRED OF THE BIG BAD WOLF ROUTINE


ALL RIGHT, ALREADY WE'LL SHUT UP! Y WANNA STOP STARING NOW?
DON'T =MUNCH= MIND MY FRIEND -
-HE'S NEW IN whoa!
SCUSE ME A MINUTE GOTTA TAKE A PEE
MEOKAY
SWORN
NAH
THIS IS A TALE THAT COULD HAPPEN IN ANY NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIALLY YOUR OWN
SHE'S HERE! IN PLAINSVILLE!
YES, I'M POSITIVE
CALM DOWN I NEED YOU TO KEEP AN EYE ON HER UNTIL I CAN ARRANGE FOR HER CAPTURE
STAY ON THE LINE I'LL MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS ON MY OTHER PHONE

PURVIS HERE
YEAH, I HEARD. ALREADY GOT AN AGENT WATCHING THE HOUSE
AND YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU SHOULD MENTION THIS TO ME?!
NOT UNTIL I VERIFIED THE SIGHTING
BUT I'LL TAKE YOUR CALL AS CONFIRMATION
DOES STARKWEATHER KNOW SHE'S BEEN MADE?
EXCUSE ME?
DOES SHE KNOW YOUR PEOPLE INDENTIFIED HER?
I DON'T THINK SO NO
BUT I DID SEND TWO OPERATIVES TO SEARCH HER PARENTS' HOUSE, AND THEY ARE PAST DUE TO REPORT DO YOU THINK ?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE JUST HAVE YOUR PEOPLE FOLLOW HER IF SHE HEADS FOR HOME GET MY AGENTS ARREST HER
IF NOT, MINE WILL TRY TO BRING HER IN ALIVE, ALTHOUGH I AM NOT VERY HOPEFUL IF IT COMES TO THAT
I HAVE TO GO NOW, PURVIS MY "MAN" IS AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS. CALL ME WITH ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

NO, SHE'S ALONE, AS FAR AS I COULD TELL
UH-HUH... YES I UNDERSTAND. WE ENGAGE ONLY IF SHE DOESN'T HEAD FOR HOME
I [illegible] I HAVE TO GO NOW MAAM
BUT IF IT'S REALLY HER, THIS COULD BE OUR BIG BREAK!
DON'T EVEN THINK IT
WE HAVE OUR ORDERS
?

WHERE IS SHE?
THERE SHE IS
THAT'S A GHOST, RIGHT?
CAN WE TAKE THE WORD OF A SPOOK?
IF IT GETS US OUT OF THIS SUICIDE MISSION HELL YES!
LET'S GO GET A BITE TO EAT YOU REMEMBER THE WOLFMAN FACE I TAUGHT YOU!?
YUP
I'm THE GHOST IS, ah DOING SOMETHING
DOING WHAT?

WHY THE RUSH TO LEAVE GENTLEMEN?
YOU DID COME OUT TONIGHT TO LEARN ABOUT FEAR
THINK OF THIS AS YOUR FINAL LESSON

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13 JULY

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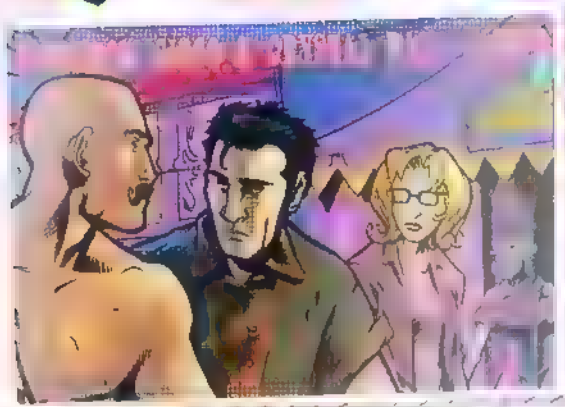
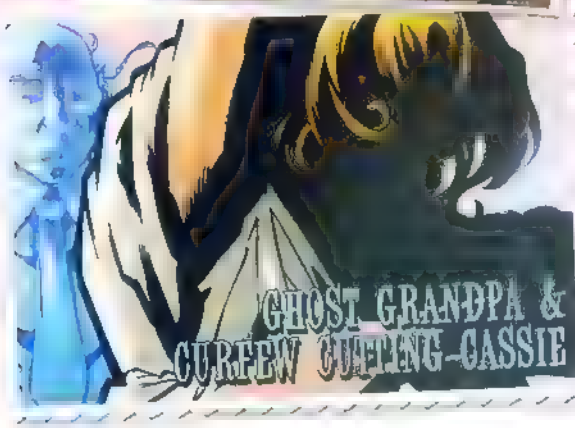
# Greetings From...

# THE POTTERFIELD CIRCUS






To Whom It May Concern,

I'm keeping this note in my pocket in case I don't survive the night. I want you to understand why I left my post as Sheriff of Tucker County and ran off cross-country with Cassie Starkweather.

First of all, Cassie's not the psycho killer you think she is. She's just a nice girl caught up in something way bigger than any one of us. The murders she's accused of were actually committed by a group of foreign agents who've been secretly operating here in Empyrean for a long time.

Just how "foreign" they are is hard to believe. These aren't Commies from Rodina. They're... well, it's too crazy to write down. But if you hear claims of "monsters" or "ghosts" - especially connected to hospitals, ambulances, or some sort of healthcare service - then you'd be on the right track. No kidding.

Anyhow, Cassie and I hooked up with a traveling show called the Potterfield Family Circus, who are already fighting these creeps. Unfortunately, one of the circus folk sort of hypnotized Cassie into forgetting all about the bad guys. If I don't find her soon, she'll be a sitting duck.

Francisco Fernandez
Sheriff, Tucker County, Gossmer

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THE TWINS CALL IT THE CROSSROADS
IT'S THE PATTERN THAT WEAVES EVERYTHING TOGETHER PEOPLE AND PLACES PAST AND FUTURE

I SAW IT IN THE CROSSBARS THAT SQUEEZED THE LIFE OUT OF YOUR FRIEND HELENE

I SAW IT WRITTEN IN BLOOD ON THE NUT HOUSE FLOOR

I SAW IT GLIMMER EVERY TIME THOSE DARK SPIRIT THINGS OPENED THE DOOR TO HELL

THE TWINS LET ME SEE ALL THE LIVES THAT CRISSCROSS YOURS CASSIE

ME AGENT MELCHIOR

AND HIS HIGH AND MIGHTY BOSS, J ELGAR PURVIS

WHO'S IN CAHOOTS WITH THE MONSTER QUEEN BYLETH

THE GIRLS SHOWED ME THIS - THE PATTERN, THE LATTICE THE WEAVE CAUSE THEY WERE SORRY

SORRY ABOUT WHAT THE PHONY FORTUNE TELLER HAD TRICKED THEM INTO DOING TO YOU

ERASING YOUR MEMORY SENDING YOU HOME DEFENSELESS

AND THERE, IN THE WEAVE WERE THE TWO MONSTERS MASQUERADING AS YOUR PARENTS, WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO KILL YOU

AND THE N B I AGENTS OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE WAITING TO ARREST YOU

AND THE THING THAT SAYS IT'S YOUR GRANDFATHER'S GHOST

I FINALLY HAD TO BREAK OFF BEFORE MY HEAD EXPLODED
THAT'S =gasp= THAT'S IT, GIRLS =huff= NO MORE
YOU OKAY, CISCO?
YEAH YEAH I SAW HER
SHE'S GONE HOME, TO PLAINSVILLE S ABOUT A FOUR HOUR DRIVE
=SNIFF= WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST TELL ME WHERE SHE WENT, GALINA? IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE NOW TO SAVE HER !
YOU SAW WHAT I'VE SEEN THE PATTERN, THE INTERSECTIONS, THE CROSSROADS OF DESTINY! YOU FELT ITS POWER
NOW YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I HAD TO SEND CASSIE AWAY!
YES I COULD'VE TOLD YOU BUT THAT'S NOT THE SAME AS SEEING FOR YOURSELF
I COULDN'T RISK GETTING SQUEEZED OUT BY HER I COULDN'T RISK LOSING MY CONNECTION TO THE TWINS..!

IF YOU'RE ASKING ME FOR SYMPATHY, FORGET IT!
YOU USED THE TWINS YOU TRICKED THEM INTO MAKING CASSIE FORGET HER OWN ABILITIES, BLINDED HER TO THE THINGS THAT ARE STILL HUNTING HER
AND YOU SENT HER TO THE ONE PLACE GUARANTEED TO BE STAKED OUT BY THE LAW, THE MONSTERS, OR BOTH!
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN GET TO PLAINSVILLE IN TIME, BUT I HAVE TO TRY
HERE THERE'S A RED CONVERTIBLE OUT IN THE LOT IT BELONGED TO THE LAST BATCH OF BOGEYMEN WE AMBUSHED
THANKS SHORTFUSE
IS, uh IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE UP FOR YOU KNOW ?
YOU CAN LEAVE
BUT -
YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US ANYMORE
NOT ONE OF US

WHAT I DON'T GET IS, WHY DID SHE *SNEAK OUT* FOR THE NIGHT? DID SHE GO TO MEET AN *ACCOMPLICE*
OR WAS SHE JUST OUT FOR *KICKS*? I MEAN, WHY THE HECK WOULD SHE RISK GETTING *SEEN* LIKE THAT?
BEATS ME. ASK HER AFTER WE *CUFF* HER

SHE'S BACK! I CAN HEAR HER UP THERE WILL YOU HURRY?
OKAY OKAY THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY
THAT WAS QUICK
SO WHAT'S THE BIG EMERGENCY HERE? I THOUGHT THE G MEN GOT THE REAL STARKWEATHERS OUTTA YOUR WAY?
THEY DID! NOW KEEP YOUR VOICES DOWN
CASSIE STARKWEATHER IS UP THERE RIGHT NOW!

SHE IS KNOWING YOU ARE HERE, AS WELL?
SHE THINKS WE RE HER PARENTS. I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S FAKING OR IF SHE REALLY CAN'T TE... WHAT WE ARE
MAINTAIN CALM, BEASELY. WE MUST NOT BE SQUANDERING OPPORTUNITY AS SO MANY HAVE BEFORE
YOU GOT SOMETHIN' IN MIND, PINKY?
DA. WE WILL RELOCATE HER TO BATTLEGROUND OF OUR CHOOSING
COMRADE ADVERSARY HIMSELF DEMANDED GIRL CAPTURED ALIVE, THEN DELIVERED TO PERDITION
I PROPOSE WE DELIVER FIRST, THEN CAPTURE
WE WAIT FOR HER TO GO BE SLEEPING. THEN ENTER ROOM AND OPEN PORTAL
BEFORE SHE KNOWS WHAT IS HAPPENING, THESE TWO KULAKS THROW HER THROUGH
AND WHEN SHE IS IN PERDITION AND PORTAL CLOSES, HER CAPTURE IS INEVITABLE
AFTER ALL, THAT ROAD LEADS ONLY TO ONE PLACE

AND DID I EVER TELL YOU GIRLS ABOUT MY FRIEND *EDMUND* BACK IN THE TRENCH WAR?
ONLY ABOUT *TEN TIMES*, TOO-TOO
LIGHTEN UP, CASSIE I *LOVE* YOUR GRANDPA'S STORIES
EDMUND PLAYED COLLEGE *HOOPS* BEFORE HE GOT DRAFTED
HE WAS A *TALL* DRINK'A WATER, AND REALLY HAD TO KEEP HIS NOGGIN LOW IN THE TRENCHES
ANYWAY, ONE DAY THE FRONT WAS ALL QUIET, AND HE LEFT HIS POST FOR A MINUTE TO VISIT THE *CHOW WAGON*
HE'S ALMOST TO THE WAGON WITH HIS MESS KIT IN HAND, WHEN WE HEAR A *WHISTLING* SOUND
AND *BOOM!* AN ENEMY SHELL LANDS RIGHT *ON TOP* OF HIS HEAD!
THAT'S *RIGHT!* HAH!
NEVER DID FIND A *BIT* OF HIM
?

HEY! YOU'RE NOT INVITED TO THIS TEA PARTY!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT I WAS HAVING FUN WITH HELENE
NO. I RETURNED THOSE GIFTS, TOO TOO. I KEPT MY RECEIPT AND I--
...HOLD IT. HOW CAN YOU PROTECT ME IF I'M REALLY SLEEPING RIGHT NOW?
EASY, NOW! I DON'T WANNA GET NEAR THAT THING
I DON'T WANNA SEE

ALL THE CHICKENS WERE COMING HOME TO ROOST, CASSIE
AND THE FOX WAS ALREADY IN THE HENHOUSE
WHICH I GUESS MADE ME THE FARMER'S WATCHDOG, RUNNIN' LIKE CRAZY TO STOP A SLAUGHTER--
HALF SURE THAT ALL I'D FIND WHEN I GOT THERE WAS BLOOD AND FEATHERS
SHE'S STILL AWAKE
ONCE SHE LEAVES THE ROOM GET THAT WINDOW OPEN
YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
Shhh--!

WHAT IF SHE'S NOT ASLEEP?
AH'LL OPEN A PORTAL THE SECOND WE'RE THROUGH THAT DOOR SLEEPIN OR NOT, JUST CHUCK 'ER IN.
WHAT'S WHAT'S IN THERE ?!
GRRRAHHRR
KLATR
THUMP
NO!
HELENE --?!
EYAGHH--!
HELENE!!
WH--
WAITAMINUTE
WHAT IS THIS?! SOME SORTA TRAP?
ALL THAT JUNK ABOUT "THE ADVERSARY" AND "PERDITION"
MY GRANDFATHER NEVER TALKED SUCH HOGWASH IN HIS LIFE!
WHO ARE YOU REALLY?!

HERE GOES NOTHING
SHE MUST'VE GONE TO THE JOHN
WE'LL CATCH HER COMING BACK TO BED
WAIT
?
THIS IS OUR MOMENT, MANTUS. LET'S DO THIS WITH OUR REAL FACES
READY?
READY
WHEN WE'RE DONE, YOU TWO SHOULD GET A ROOM
NOW!

HALT! YOU'RE UNDER ARR-
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME--?!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
EEEYAHHH!
BLAM
WHO TH BLUE BLAZES ARE THESE GUYS?!
WHERE'S THE FREAKIN GIRL?!
FWASH
WHAT THE--?

HELP ME...!
BLAM
CLOSE IT! CLOSE IT!
AW, SUGAR JETS! THIS IS A FREAKIN' DISASTER!
ohhhh.
SHE'S GOTTA BE HERE SOMEWHERE
NOW WHAT ARE WE TO DO?
DON'T LOOK AT ME--!
LET'S JUST FIND THE GIRL

WHY NOT START WITH THE *TRUTH*? THE *WHOLE* TRUTH! WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
RRRIGHT. YOU THINK LITTLE OLD *ME* IS SUPPOSED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE *WHOLE WIDE WORLD*?
SORRY BUT I'M NOT REALLY BUYING THAT
HELLLP!
PLEEEASE!

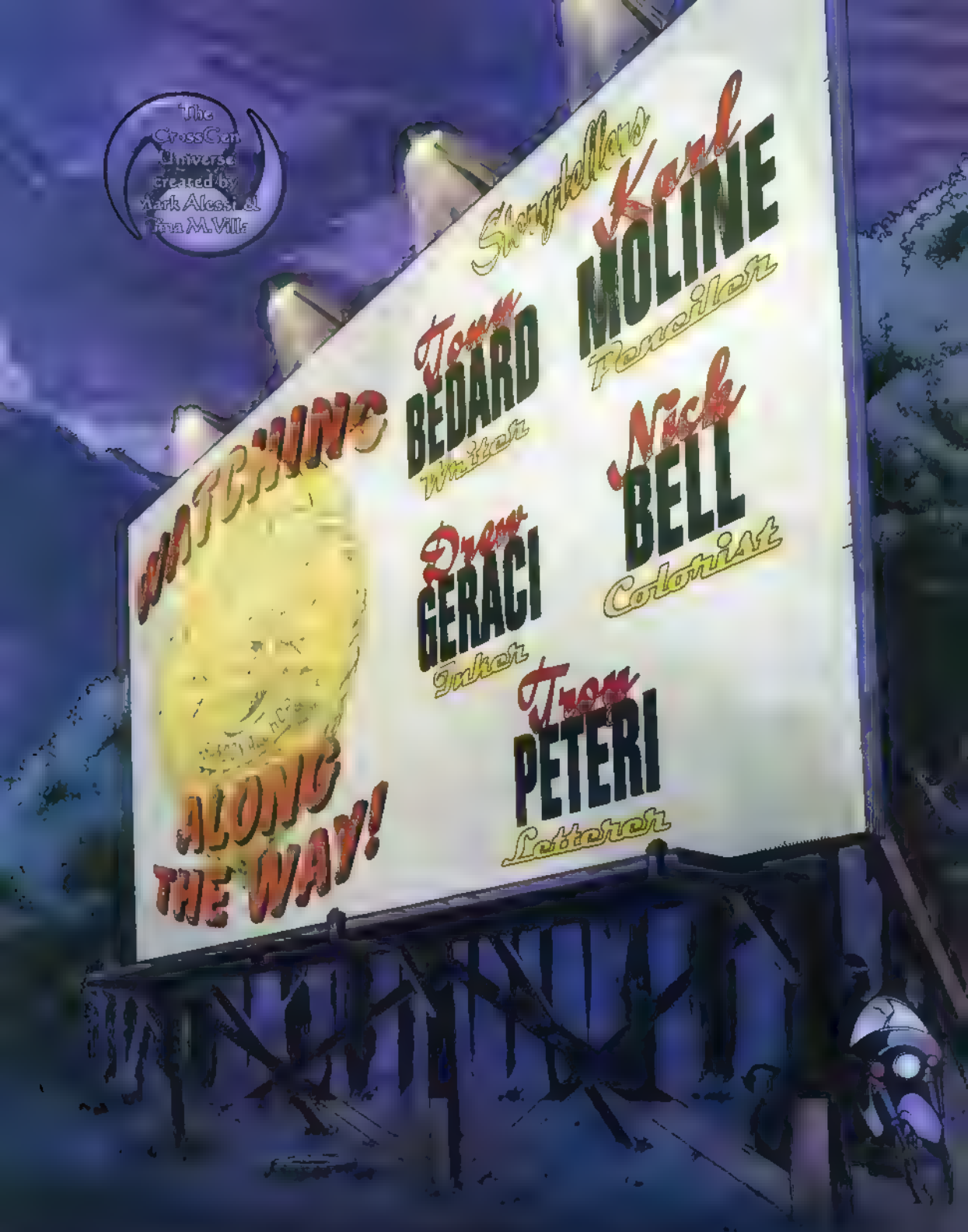
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER?
WHEN HAS ANYTHING EVER BEEN RIGHT WITH HER?
SHE MUST'A SLEEPWALKED DOWN HERE
HOROSHO I AM NOT WANTING TO FACE HER AWAKE
YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL THERE PARTNER SHE SUCKED YOU IN LAST TIME, LIKE A BISCUIT SOPPIN GRAVY
RECKON AS LONG AS WE DON'T TOUCH HER, WE RE OKAY
WHICH STILL IS LEAVING US WITH PROBLEM THE LIVING ARE BEYOND OUR GRASP
AND WITHOUT MANTUS AND RIMMON TO DO DIRTY WORK -
FORGET THOSE TWO THEY COULDN'T POUR PISS FROM A BOOT IF THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE WRITTEN ON THE HEEL!
BESIDES, I HAVE AN IDEA -- SOMETHING WE'VE YET TO TRY IN THE FOUR OR FIVE YEARS WE'VE HAD THIS GIG
I'M WONDERIN, WHAT IF I OPEN A PORTAL RIGHT UNDER HER YOU KNOW, LIKE A TRAP DOOR ?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SAVE HELENE?! SHE'S SHE'S DEAD, ISN'T SHE?
WILL YOU HELP ME?

THIS WON'T HURT A BIT, DARLIN'
THOUGH YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE A SLIGHT SINKIN' SENSATION heh.
PINKY..!
GET AWAY FROM HER, BEASELY!
I I GO FOR HELP !
DON'T LEAVE ME, PINKIEEEEE
RIGHT ABOUT THE TIME YOU WERE ABSORBING THAT EVIL SON OF A GUN, I WAS FINALLY ARRIVING AT YOUR HOUSE

DAY LATE AND A DOLLAR SHORT STORY OF MY LIFE
-UNGH-
KRASH
CASSIE ?
YOU'D DONE THIS TRICK BEFORE - BACK WHEN THE CREEPS HAD US CORNERED IN THAT CHURCH
THAT TIME, YOU SORT OF VOMITED THE DARK SPIRIT RIGHT BACK OUT
BUT THIS TIME ?

THIS TIME I WISHED I COULD STICK A GHOST FINGER DOWN YOUR THROAT
PURE EVIL WAS TRAPPED INSIDE YOUR HEAD, AND ALL I COULD DO WAS PRAY
D DON T YOU SO MUCH AS MOVE
NOW MISTER, YOU ARE GONNA TELL ME
JUST WHAT THE HELL IS GO.NG ON HERE
OR I SWEAR TO GOD I'L. SHOOT YOU BOTH
shh= YOU WANNA KILL US? TAKE A NUMBER, PAL

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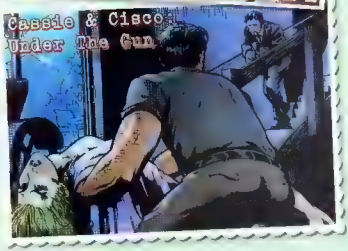
# Greetings From... PLAINSVILLE

## HOME OF WELKIN STATE UNIVERSITY




**FIELD OPERATIVE REPORT**

To: The Adversary
From: Dark Spirit Viktor Suvorov
Re: Cassandra Starkweather
Date: July 23

First of all, failure of mission to collect Starkweather girl from house of her parents rests entirely with my *nekulturny* partner, Dark Spirit Dale Beasely. Please allow me to explain:

Comrade Beasely and I were summoned to town of Plainsville, in state of Welkin, by two shape-changers named Mantus and Rimmon. They were assigned to search childhood home of Perdition's enemy, Cassie Starkweather. When girl came home, they requested our help to ambush her.

However, two agents of capitalist Secret Police arrived to arrest girl at same time, and big crossfire followed. When I departed, Mantus had taken one human agent back to Perdition, the other agent was plenty hurt, and Rimmon was dead.

Worst of all, Beasely, a dark spirit supposedly untouchable by living things, was somehow absorbed by Starkweather. I once suffered such attack from her and barely escaped intact. We must consider Beasely forever lost to us. I only hope by ingesting one so foul, Starkweather suffers more harm than she inflicts.

Yours in Brimstone Bond,

SUVOROV

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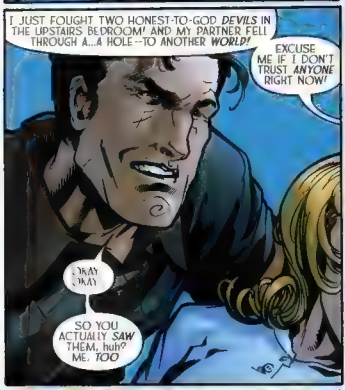
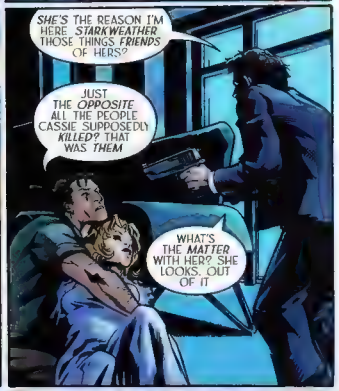
ANSWER ME! WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS GOING ON HERE?
MY PARTNER IS GONE! JUST GONE!

AT EASE, PAL. I'M GUESSING BY THE SUIT AND GUN YOU'RE A FED, RIGHT?
WELL, I'M A COUNTY COP, SO YOU DON'T NEED TO POINT THAT THING AT ME
SHUT UP!


I JUST FOUGHT TWO HONEST-TO-GOD DEVILS IN THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM! AND MY PARTNER FELL THROUGH A...A HOLE--TO ANOTHER WORLD!
EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T TRUST ANYONE RIGHT NOW!
OKAY OKAY
SO YOU ACTUALLY SAW THEM, huh? ME, TOO


SHE'S THE REASON I'M HERE. STARKWEATHER. THOSE THINGS FRIENDS OF HERS?
JUST THE OPPOSITE. ALL THE PEOPLE CASSIE SUPPOSEDLY KILLED? THAT WAS THEM.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HER? SHE LOOKS, OUT OF IT

I DON'T KNOW, AGENT. WITH HER, IT'S ONE FOULED UP THING AFTER ANOTHER, MOST OF WHICH MAKES NO SENSE
HELLO ?

LET'S JUST MAKE SURE THERE AREN'T ANY MORE CREEPS HIDING IN THE HOUSE, THEN I'LL DO MY BEST TO EXPLAIN DEAL?
HELLO. ? PINKY ? ANYBODY ?

WHERE'D EVERYTHIN' GO?!
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
!
THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT, LI'L SLEEPWALKER!
YOU SUCKED ME INSIDE YOU, SAME AS YOU DID PINKY, LAST TIME WE SAW YOU. SHREDDED HIM GOOD.
WELL, YOU'RE NOT DEALIN' WITH NO COMMIE WIMP THIS TIME--
--YOU'RE UP AGAINST DALE BEASLEY--
--THE RAVENROCK RIPPER!
HEEERE, LI'L PIGGIE!
FROZEN WITH TERROR? TOO DUMB TO BE SCARED? IT DON'T MAKE NO NEVERMIND

--EITHER WAY, IT'S TIME TA SLAUGHTER TH' HAWGS!

?
YOU DONE RUNNING YOUR MOUTH?
NOW YOU GET TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH!
THIS IS MY MIND WE'RE IN. I'M IN CHARGE HERE.
AND YOU'RE GONNA GIVE UP ALL YOUR SECRETS--
--RIGHT NOW!

OH, MAN, THIS THING IS STARTING TO REALLY HURT.
ADRENALINE'S WEARING OFF. YOU SHOULD GET THAT BUSTED WING LOOKED AT.
GEE, THANKS FOR THE ADVICE, DOC.
AND WHAT DO I TELL MY SUPERIORS WHEN THEY ASK ME HOW I BROKE IT? OR WHEN THEY ASK WHAT HAPPENED TO MY PARTNER?
IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE AT HEADQUARTERS IS GOING TO LIKE THE TRUTH.
WAIT A MINUTE. THERE IS SOMEONE WHO'LL UNDERSTAND--!
DO YOU KNOW AN AGENT NAMED GUNNAR MELCHIOR? SLIM, DARK HAIR, SCARED'A GERMS?
THE CRACKPOT THAT RUNS THE CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY UNIT? HE'S ONE OF DIRECTOR PURVIS' PRIZE PETS, FROM WHAT I HEAR.
YOU SAYING HE KNOWS ABOUT THESE BUMP-IN-THE-NIGHT TYPES?
SO, YOU EXPECT HIM TO RESCUE MY CAREER ONCE PURVIS BRANDS ME A CRACK-POT, TOO?
OH, NO, NO, NO.
I'M SAYING YOU'D BETTER TALK TO MELCHIOR BEFORE YOU GO TO PURVIS. TRUST ME ON THIS.

" AGENT MELCHIOR IS NO FRIEND OF MINE, BUT HE'S THE ONLY PERSON I'D TRUST RIGHT NOW AT THE BUREAU, IF I WAS YOU..."
ZZZZZZ
Huh WHA...
Oh, NO I TOLD THE LAST GUY: I DON'T KNOW WHERE CASSIE IS, BUT MY DAUGHTER IS INNO--
Shhh--! KEEP IT DOWN, MISTER STARKWEATHER. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN HERE, AND IT'S VERY IMPORTANT YOU LISTEN
I'M SPECIAL AGENT GUNNAR MELCHIOR
"MELCHIOR"? LIKE THE-
YES, THE MAN WHO OPERATED YOUR DAUGHTER'S MENTAL HOSPITAL WAS MY FATHER THAT'S WHY I TOOK AN INTEREST IN HER CASE
IN FACT I ALMOST ARRESTED HER
UNTIL I SAW FOR MYSELF THE INFILTRATORS THAT ARE THE REAL CAUSE OF HER TROUBLES, AND RAN AFOUL OF THEM MYSELF
YOU KNOW SHE DIDN'T KILL ALL THOSE PEOPLE?! THAT SHE'S NOT CRAZY?
MISTER STARKWEATHER, EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER'S SITUATION COUNTS AS "CRAZY" IN MY BOOK--
--MOST OF ALL, THE FACT THAT MY BOSS SEEMS TO BE IN ON THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST HER
NOW TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT HER RECENT TROUBLES AND HER VISIONS
AND IF YOU WANT YOUR DAUGHTER TO SURVIVE, I SUGGEST YOU TALK ONLY TO ME

RAVENROCK PARISH. THE GASLIGHT QUARTER
WICKED WEDNESDAY PARADE'S IN FULL SWING.
WHY ARE WE HERE, BEASELY?
WORK IT OUT YORESELF, FREAK!
WELL, IT'S YOUR MEMORY
AND FOR SOME REASON THIS NIGHT WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU
OH, NO. DON'T TELL ME
"YOUR FIRST VICTIM"

MAMA-LOA HOPE Y'LIKE WILD FLOWERS
LOTSA PEOPLE COME ASKIN' Y' BLESSIN' AN' LEAVIN' TH' MARK
BUT MAH PRAYER'S SPECIAL TONIGHT
AH'M GETTIN' HITCHED TOMORROW, MAMA-LOA ME AN' TREVOR'S RUNNIN' OFF TOGETHER
AH DON'T CARE WHAT PAPPY SAYS AH LOVE
SHOULDA MINDED YORE PAPPY
!
BUT THAT'S THE WHOLE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS AIN'T IT? Y'ALL NEVER MET A MAN Y' COULDN'T IGNORE
LEAST NOT TILL NOW

YOU GO ON AN' SCREAM NOW WON'T BOTHER THE PARADE NONE
SO CLOSE T'HELP AN' YET SO FAR
Uh-uh
NO WAY. I'M LETTING YOU GET YOUR JOLLIES FROM THIS GARBAGE!
GOD KNOWS HOW MANY TIMES YOU'VE RELIVED THIS MOMENT OVER THE YEARS
SAVORING WHAT YOU DID TO THAT POOR GIRL, OVER AND OVER AND OVER...
NO MORE!
THIS TIME YOU'RE GONNA FEEL WHAT SHE FELT!
HOLY GOD--!

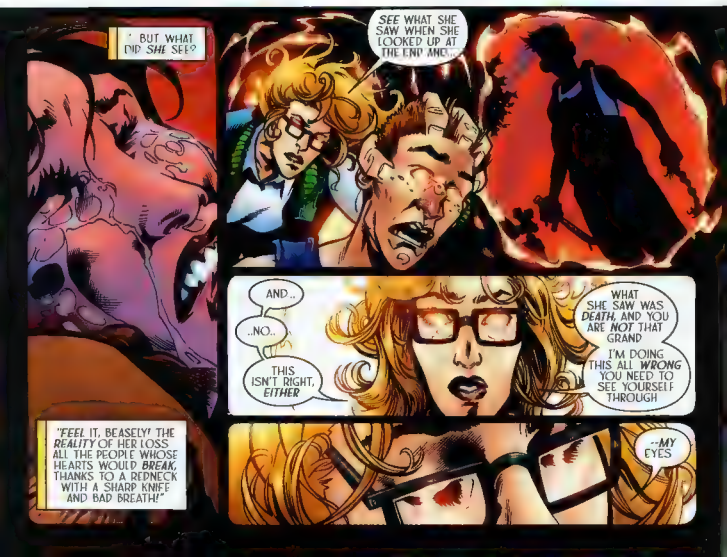
NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT *THAT*, huh? IT NEVER DAWNED ON YOU THAT OTHER PEOPLE EVEN *HAVE* FEELINGS. *DID IT?*
STOP! PLEASE! MAKE ME STOP!
WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH HER?
I DON'T KNOW
NNNWAA K-K-K-KLLL NUHH
I'LL CALL AN AMBULANCE
NO!
THAT'S THE *LAST* THING YOU OUGHTTA DO! THEY *WORK* FOR THE HOSPITALS!
YOU WANNA *HELP?* DIAL YOUR *HQ* AND TALK TO MELCHIOR *NOW!*
NNGGG..

REMEMBER, MISTER STARKWEATHER NOT A WORD ABOUT THIS
~WHEW~
STOP RIGHT THERE, MELCHIOR
Uh, I, I WAS JUST--
BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU ALL OVER!
YOU GOT A CALL HOLDING IN YOUR OFFICE FIELD AGENT SAYS IT'S URGENT!
HELLO? THIS IS MELCHIOR
AGENT WHO?
YOU'RE WHERE?
YOU'VE YOU'VE SEEN THEM TOO?!

"ONLY *ONE* PERSON SAW THE *TRUTH* THAT NIGHT, AND IT WASN'T YOU, BEASELY. WHAT YOU FELT WAS A *LIE*

"YOU SAW IT AS THE START OF A *CAREER* AFTER YEARS OF DREAMING ABOUT IT. AFTER ALL THE *FANTASIES*, YOU'D FINALLY GONE AND *DONE* IT

"YOU TOOK HER LIFE, AND YOU TOOK YOUR TROPHY, AND THE *WHOLE CITY* PARTIED ALL AROUND. LIKE *EVERYONE* WAS CELEBRATING YOUR BIG NIGHT


" BUT WHAT DID *SHE* SEE?
*SEE* WHAT SHE SAW WHEN SHE LOOKED UP AT THE END AND...
AND...
..NO..
THIS ISN'T RIGHT, *EITHER*
WHAT SHE SAW WAS *DEATH*, AND YOU ARE *NOT* THAT GRAND
I'M DOING THIS ALL *WRONG*
YOU NEED TO SEE YOURSELF THROUGH
--MY EYES
"*FEEL* IT, BEASELY! THE *REALITY* OF HER LOSS. ALL THE PEOPLE WHOSE HEARTS WOULD *BREAK*, THANKS TO A REDNECK WITH A SHARP KNIFE AND BAD BREATH!"

HOW... HOW COULD AH ?
Oh GAWWWD WHAT'VE AH DONE !!
=A-huhe= Oh, LORD WHY COULDN'T AH SEE? =A-huhe= =A-huhe=
IT'S LIKE SOME PIECE ME WAS ALWAYS MISSIN; BUT...
BUT NOW ALLA SUDDEN IT'S THERE
HOW'D YOU DO THAT, ANGEL?
I'M NOT SURE, DALE
I THINK MAYBE I SHARE MY OWN CONSCIENCE WITH YOU, AND IT SORT OF TOOK ROOT

WEL. ?
I DON'T KNOW. I TOLD MELCHIOR *EVERYTHING*, AND THE GUY JUST ASKS ME TO HOLD THE LINE AND *RUNS* OFF
IF THIS IS A *SET-UP* TO KEEP ME IN PLACE WHILE THEY CLOSE IN. .
NAH. THAT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY *SENSE*.
OH, AND TRUSTING YOU *DOES* ?
GASP!
WHOA
WHAT IN THE
WHOOOSH

I WANTED TO PUNISH YOU, BUT I COULDN'T DO THAT
TO MYSELF
DIOS MIO...
YOU'RE SEEING THIS, TOO, RIGHT ?

J. Elgo
dir
rrmmmble
SIR ?
KLICK
WHO'S THERE?
IT'S ME, SIR GUNNAR MELCHIOR
I NEED TO TALK TO YOU IT'S IMPORTANT
IT BETTER BE IF YOU CAME BARGING IN HERE WITHOUT KNOCKING! WHY'RE YOU STILL AT THE OFFICE THIS LATE AFTER HOURS, ANYWAY?

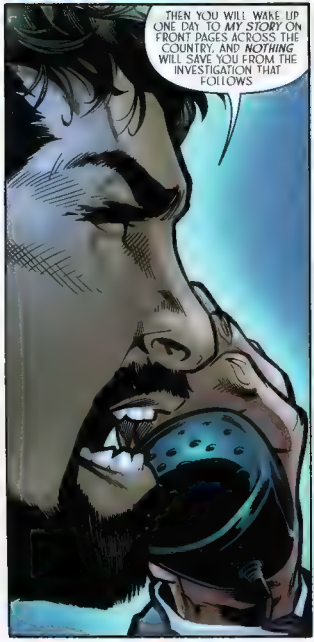
IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO SEE IN HERE, SIR
BRIGHT ENOUGH FOR YOU? NOW GET TO THE POINT!
SIR I
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY ORGANIZATION THAT IS AFTER CASSIE STARKWEATHER. I LISTENED IN TO THE PHONE CALL EARLIER, WHERE YOU AGREED TO LET THEM HAVE HER
SIR, I DON'T KNOW HOW A MAN LIKE YOU, A GENUINE PATRIOT AND DEFENDER OF THIS GREAT NATION, COULD GET MIXED UP WITH CREATURES LIKE THEM, BUT I CAN'T STAND BY AND ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN
HH
SO YOU'VE BEEN SPYING ON ME, huh?
ON ME
YOU'RE NOT NEARLY AS SMART AS I THOUGHT YOU WERE
SIR, EITHER YOU CLEAR CASSIE'S NAME IN PUBLIC AND RENOUNCE WHATEVER ILL-CONSIDERED AGREEMENT YOU HAVE WITH THESE MONSTERS, OR I TELL THE PRESS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO!

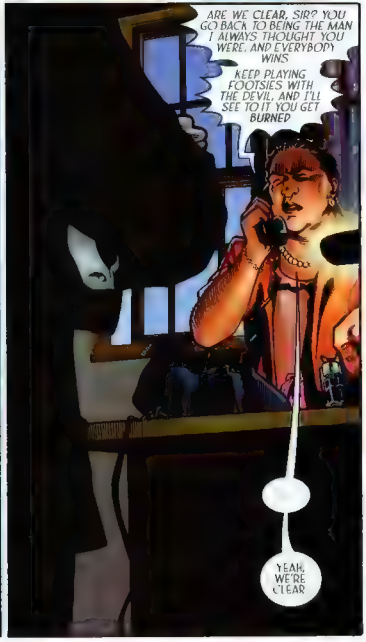
YOU'RE GIVING ME AN *ULTIMATUM*?! YOU'RE *NOTHING*, BOY!
I *MADE* YOU, AND NOW I'LL MAKE YOU *DISAPPEAR*!
NO!
WHAT IN THE HELL *?!
WELL, I WASN'T EXACTLY *EXPECTING* ANYONE IN MY OFFICE PAST *TEN* AT NIGHT!
SO THE RUMORS ARE TRUE

LOOSE TALK, PITY YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO *CONFIRM* IT
THOUGHT YOU MIGHT FEEL THAT WAY
THERE'S A *CALL* ON HOLD FOR YOU. YOU'D BE *SMART* TO TAKE IT BEFORE YOU PULL THAT TRIGGER
*PURVIS* HERE. WHO AM I TALKING TO?!
DIRECTOR PURVIS. THIS IS FIELD AGENT SMITH AT THE STARKWEATHER RESIDENCE
*STOP*, SIR. DON'T BOTHER WITH THE LINE OF BALONEY--I'VE SEEN FOR *MYSELF* WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, AND I *KNOW* YOU'RE INVOLVED
MY PARTNER IS MISSING AND PROBABLY *DEAD* THANKS TO THE CREEPS YOU'RE IN BED WITH, SIR, AND I DO *NOT* PLAN ON ENDING UP LIKE HIM
*NO*, SIR. I AM *NOT* COMING BACK FOR A DEBRIEFING! IN FACT, THERE'S ONLY *ONE WAY* YOU'LL EVER SEE MY FACE AGAIN

IF YOU DON'T CALL OFF THE MANHUNT FOR CASSIE STARKWEATHER AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE TOMORROW THAT ALL CHARGES AGAINST HER HAVE BEEN DROPPED

IF YOU DO NOT RELEASE CASSIE'S PARENTS FROM INTERROGATION IMMEDIATELY
AND IF I AM UNABLE TO CONFIRM WITH AGENT MELCHIOR FROM TIME TO TIME THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER COOPERATING WITH THOSE DEVIL-PEOPLE


THEN YOU WILL WAKE UP ONE DAY TO MY STORY ON FRONT PAGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND NOTHING WILL SAVE YOU FROM THE INVESTIGATION THAT FOLLOWS


ARE WE CLEAR, SIR? YOU GO BACK TO BEING THE MAN I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE, AND EVERYBODY WINS
KEEP PLAYING FOOTSIES WITH THE DEVIL, AND I'LL SEE TO IT YOU GET BURNED
YEAH, WE'RE CLEAR

THANKS
THIS DOESN'T MAKE US FRIENDS. I LOST A LOT TONIGHT, THANKS TO YOU. MY PARTNER, MY JOB, MAYBE EVEN MY MARBLES
SO...WHAT JUST HAPPENED? WE BOTH SAW IT, BUT WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT WE SAW...
THAT WAS DALE BEASELY, THE RAVENROCK RIPPER
WELL, IT WAS HIS GHOST, ANYHOW
HE WAS ONE OF THE DARK SPIRITS, BUT SOMEHOW I...CLEANED HIM
LIKE...I FIXED WHAT WAS WRONG WITH HIM, AND HE WAS ABLE TO, Y'KNOW MOVE ON
YOU CAN DO THAT? PURIFY SOMEONE AS SICK AS BEASELY..?
TOO-TOO SAID THERE WAS A LOT I COULD DO WITH MY GIFT
MAYBE I REALLY AM SUPPOSED TO USE IT FOR SOME BIGGER PURPOSE, OR MISSION, OR WHATEVER...
SOON AS WE GRAB SOME CLOTHES FOR HER, WE'RE OUT OF HERE. THE LAW MAY BE OFF HER BACK, BUT THE CREEPS'LL KEEP HUNTING HER.
WANNA COME WITH US?
NO THANKS. YOU TWO ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION
PURVIS EVER FINDS ME, HE'LL CANCEL OUR LITTLE TRUCE WITH A BULLET
GOOD LUCK TO YA

PLUS... THE DIRECTOR'S BEEN MY HERO FAR TOO LONG TO LET HIM END UP A TRAITOR
HE'LL STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT--I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT
PROTEST ALL YOU WANT, BUT YOU SAVED OUR DAUGHTER!
IF YOU'RE EVER IN PLAINSVILLE, DON'T BE A STRANGER!
DOESN'T MATTER WHERE I GO MA'AM
I'M ALWAYS A STRANGER
PSST
OR JUST A MAN
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, AGENT MELCHIOR
YES, I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOOK SUCH A RISK FOR OUR CASSIE, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED
TO BE HONEST, MA'AM, I DIDN'T DO IT FOR CASSIE. I JUST DON'T WANT THE BUREAU GOING AFTER SOMEONE WHO'S INNOCENT. IT'S NOT RIGHT

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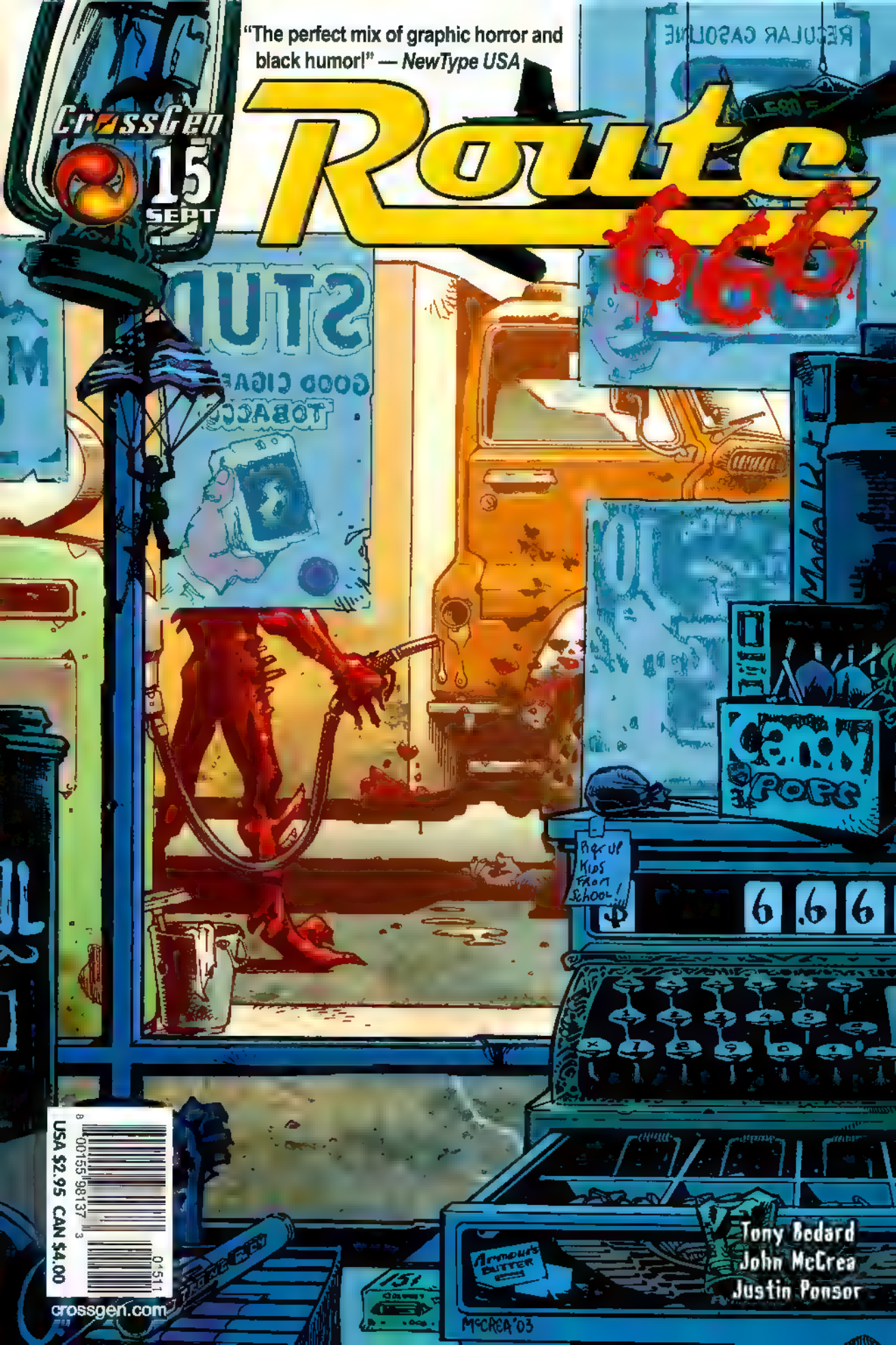
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# Greetings From...
# GOSSMER
## THE SIDEWINDER STATE

BYLETH,

I THOUGHT YOU'D GET THE MESSAGE AFTER I ATE THE LAST THREE LACKEYS YOU SENT TO FETCH ME, BUT SINCE YOU WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE, MAYBE YOU AND I SHOULD JUST MEET IN PERSON.

THERE'S A GAS STATION OUT IN THE GOSSMER DESERT WHERE STATE ROAD TWENTY CROSSES THE OLD HOMESTEAD HIGHWAY. IT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, SO WE SHOULDN'T ATTRACT MUCH ATTENTION, EVEN IF OUR LITTLE FACE-TO-FACE TAKES A BAD TURN. I'LL BE THERE THREE DAYS FROM NOW. COME ALONE.

SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS IS ABOUT THAT STARKWEATHER GIRL. SINCE SHE'S NO LONGER ON THE TEN MOST WANTED, YOUR CROSS-DRESSING FRIEND AT THE N.B.I. MUST HAVE REALLY LET YOU DOWN. JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO PICK UP WHERE DIRECTOR PURVIS LEFT OFF. IN FACT, WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU, I'LL JUST SAY NO. BUT MAYBE IF YOU HEAR IT FROM ME DIRECTLY YOU'LL STOP WASTING MY TIME AND YOUR UNDERLINGS.

TANNER

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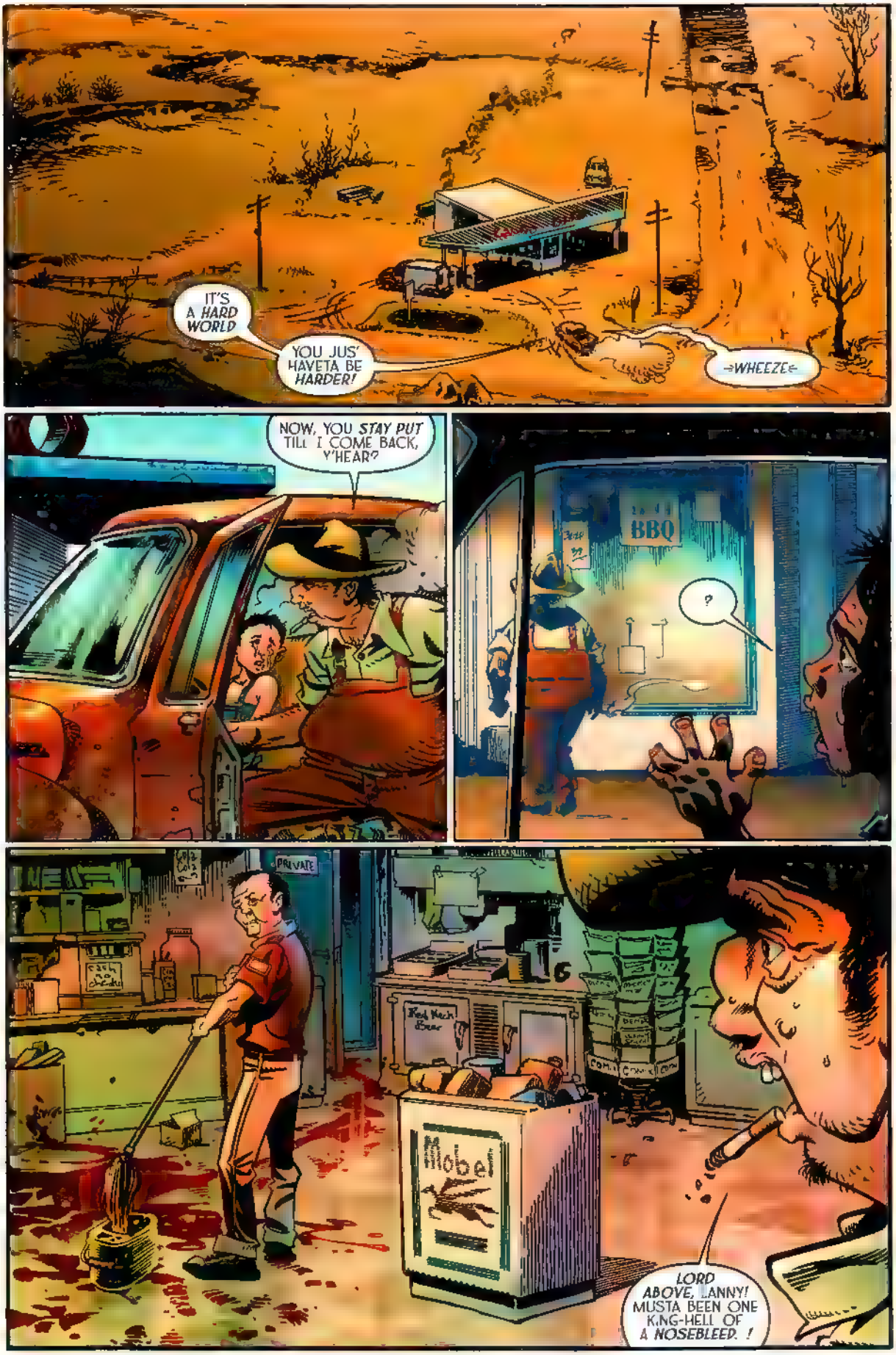
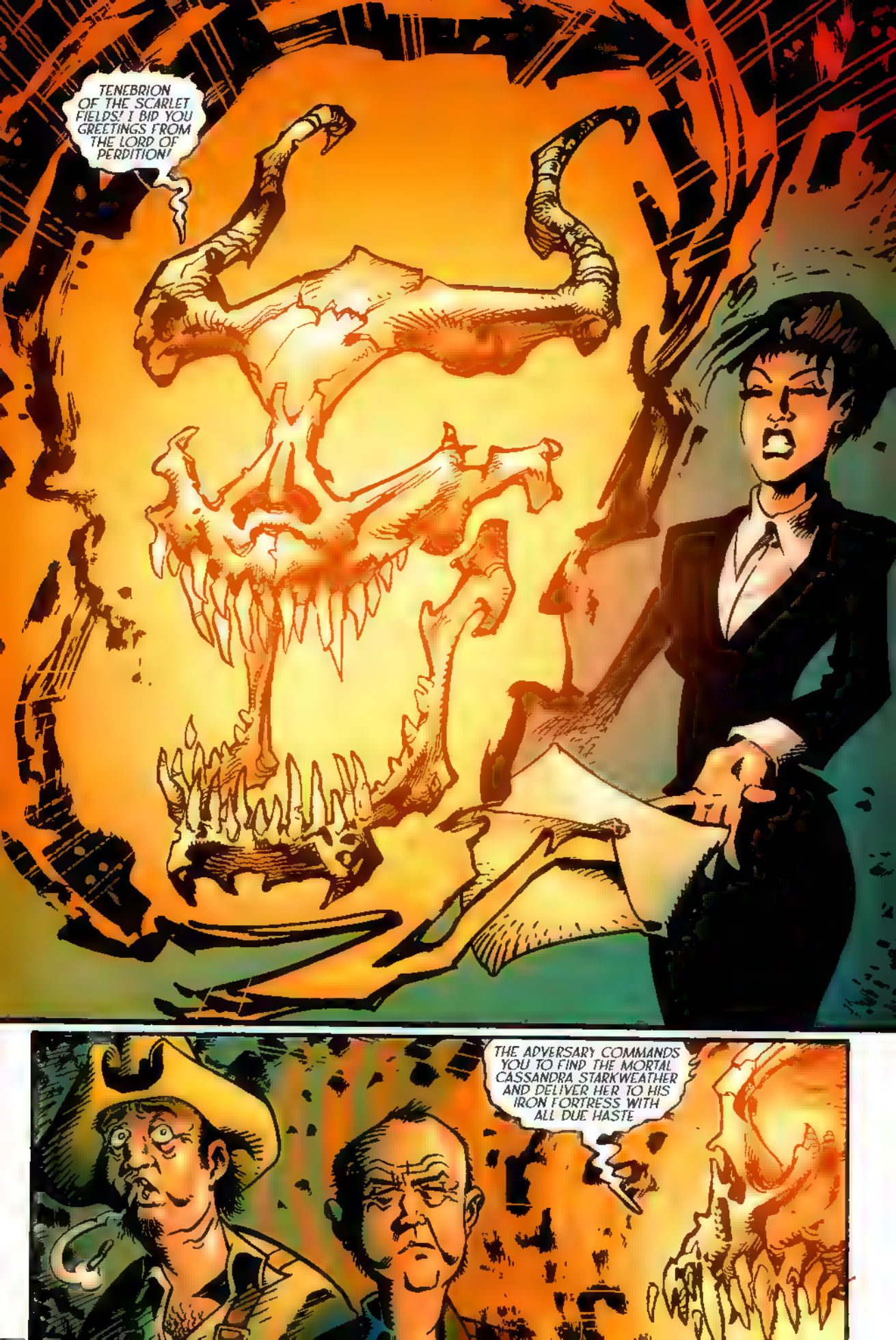
HACK
KOFF
...WHEEEEEZE...
S'MATTER, SQUIRT? HAY FEVER KICKIN' UP AGAIN?
HAKK SNFF
BETTER TOUGHEN UP, SON
CHEAP BEER


IT'S A HARD WORLD
YOU JUS' HAVETA BE HARDER!
=WHEEZE=
NOW, YOU STAY PUT TILL I COME BACK, Y'HEAR?
BBQ
?
PRIVATE
Red Neck Beer
Mobel
LORD ABOVE, LANNY! MUSTA BEEN ONE K.NG-HELL OF A NOSEBLEED. !

Huh?
Oh! THIS IS JUST BRAKE FLUID A CAN SPRUNG A LEAK, AND
Uh-huh
IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?
HELL, YEAH, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU CAN DO! WHAT DO I COME IN HERE FOR EVERY THURSDAY?
WHAT IS THIS, A QUIZ SHOW? JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT, PAL
BARBECUE PAL S'THERE SOME REASON YOU'RE ALL OF A SUDDEN TREATIN' ME LIKE A STRANGER?
SORRY NO BARBECUE TODAY
THE HELL, YOU SAY! I CAN SMELL IT COOKIN'!
IT IT ISN'T DONE YET...!
I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT

DANG, LANNY, IT SMELLS BETTER'N USUAL! WHAT'D YA PUT IN THERE?
STOP I MEAN IT
YOU GOT ABOUT TWO SECONDS TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE HELL'S GOT INTO YOU
NOTHING IT JUST NEEDS TO COOK A WHILE LONGER
LOOK, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A SIX PACK -ON THE HOUSE- AND DROP BY AGAIN IN AN HOUR OR TWO?
FREE BEER? NOW I KNOW YOU'RE UP TO NO GOOD!
RELAX! SIX COLD ONES BUYS MY SILENCE ANY DAY
WELL, TENEBRION, HERE I AM IN THE ARMPIT OF EMPYREAN, AT THE PLACE OF YOUR CHOOSING
THOUGH I MUST ADMIT I DID NOT EXPECT AN AUDIENCE

DISGUSTING HABIT
S'FUNNY IT REMINDS ME OF HOME
Mob
THIS IS THE MESSAGE I WAS INSTRUCTED TO DELIVER TO YOU
GO AHEAD
YOUR FRIEND IS IN FOR A SHOW

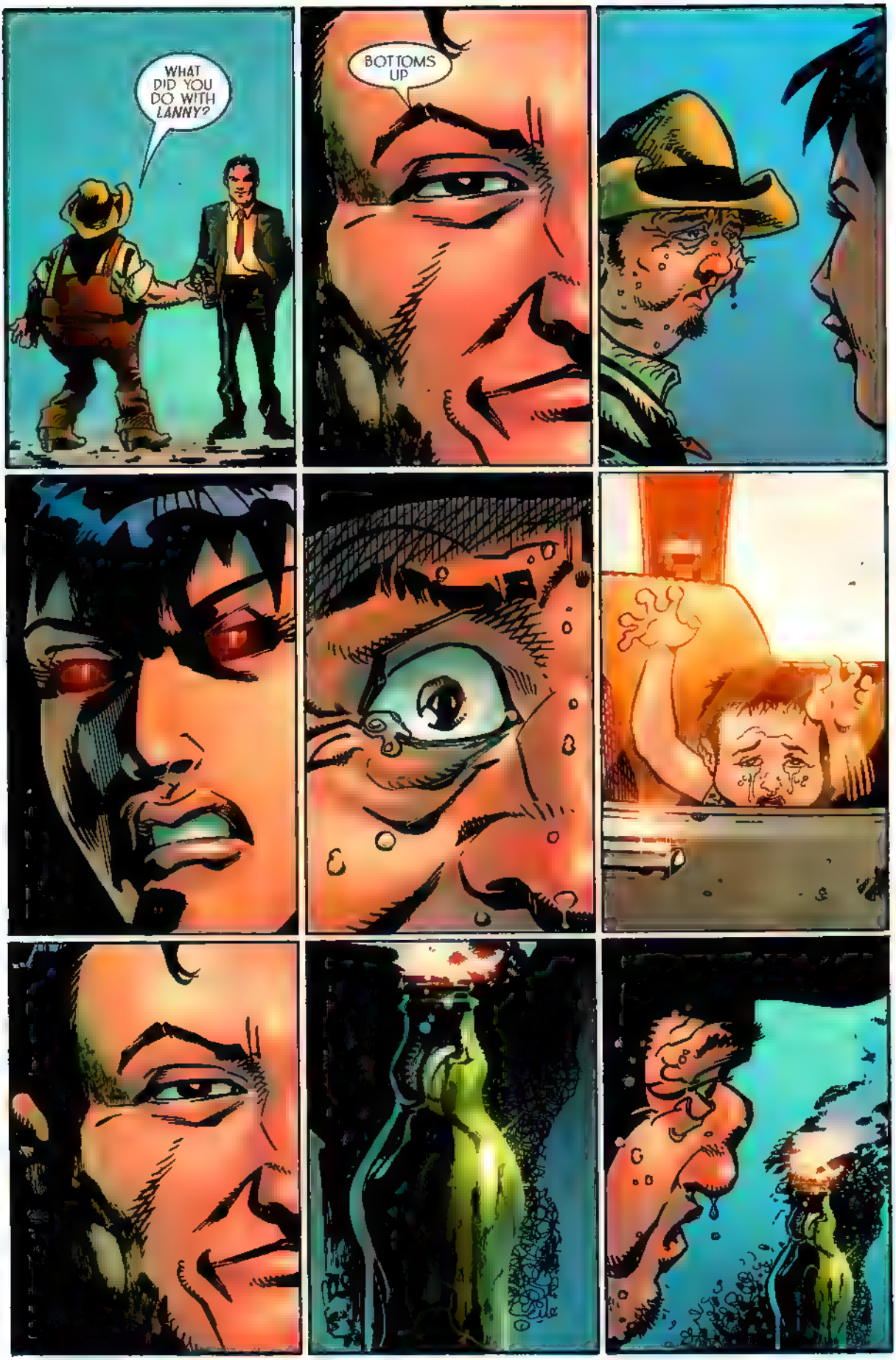

TENEBRION OF THE SCARLET FIELDS! I BID YOU GREETINGS FROM THE LORD OF PERDITION!
THE ADVERSARY COMMANDS YOU TO FIND THE MORTAL CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER AND DELIVER HER TO HIS IRON FORTRESS WITH ALL DUE HASTE

DO SO, AND YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN YOUR PAST TRANSGRESSIONS
IGNORE THIS ORDER AT YOUR OWN PERIL
SHWUF
HAHAHA...
SO THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO MEET!
YOU BOTCHED THE CAPTURE OF THAT GIRL, AND THE ADVERSARY TOLD YOU TO HIRE ME FOR THE JOB!
KLINK
WELL, YOU CAN FORGET IT I DON'T WORK FOR HIM ANY-MORE
HAVEN'T IN AGES— HE KNOWS THAT
THIS IS NOT AN ASSIGNMENT THAT YOU CAN TURN DOWN, TENEBRION!

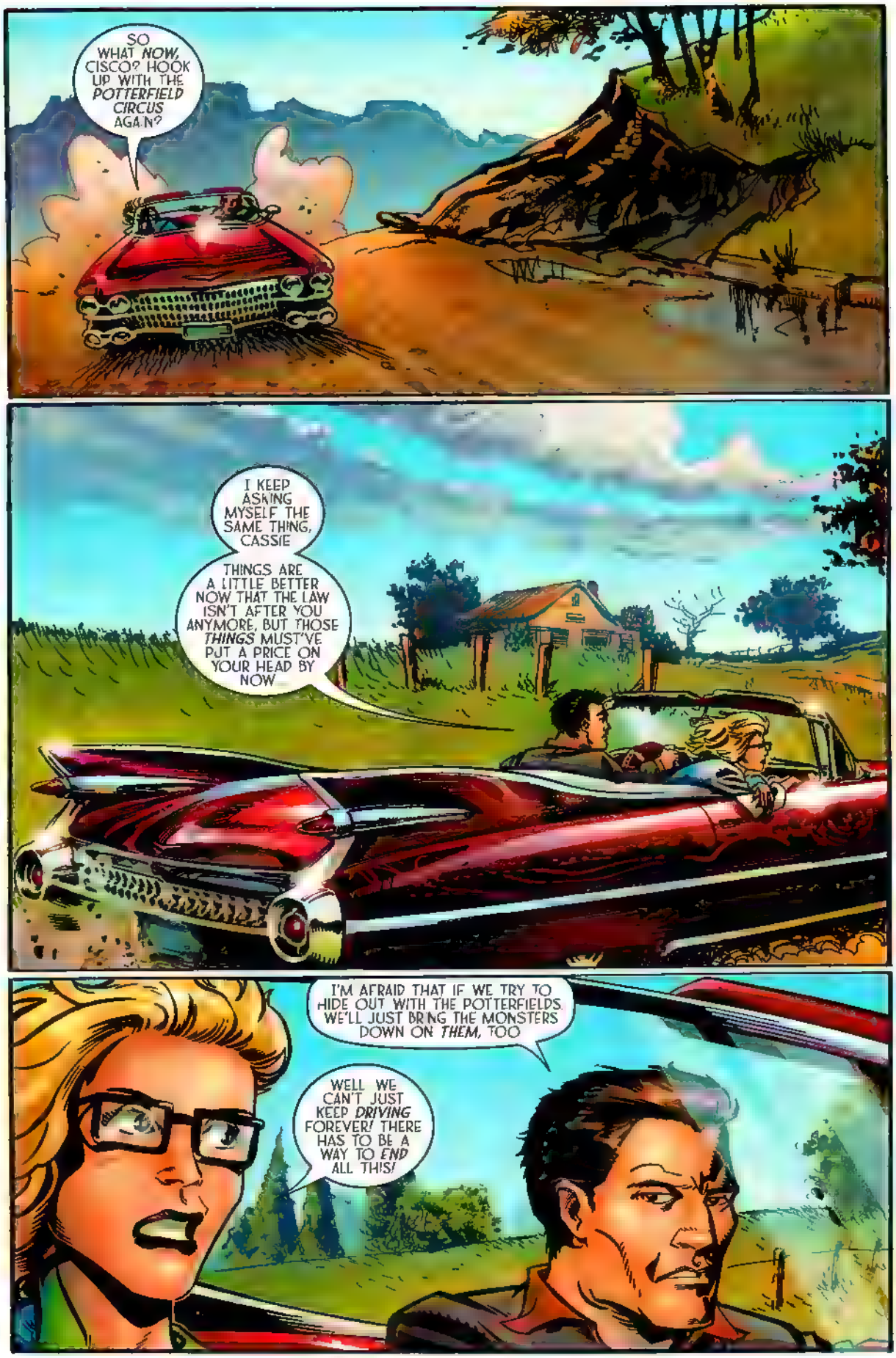
3DMIX
I TOLD YOU IT'S TANNER NOW!
CALL YOURSELF WHATEVER YOU WANT, YOU ARE A SON OF PERDITION, NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU WANDER AMONG THEM
YOU WILL OBEY HIS INFERNAL EMINENCE, OR--
OR WHAT? YOU'LL MAKE ME?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT I AM?
YES, HIS GLORY IS UPON YOU AS IT IS UPON ME I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE WHICH OF US HE FAVORED MOST
BUT I AM HERE FOR BUSINESS, NOT PLEASURE SO, HOW CAN I PERSUADE YOU TO ACCEPT THIS ASSIGNMENT?
GULP GULP GULP GULP

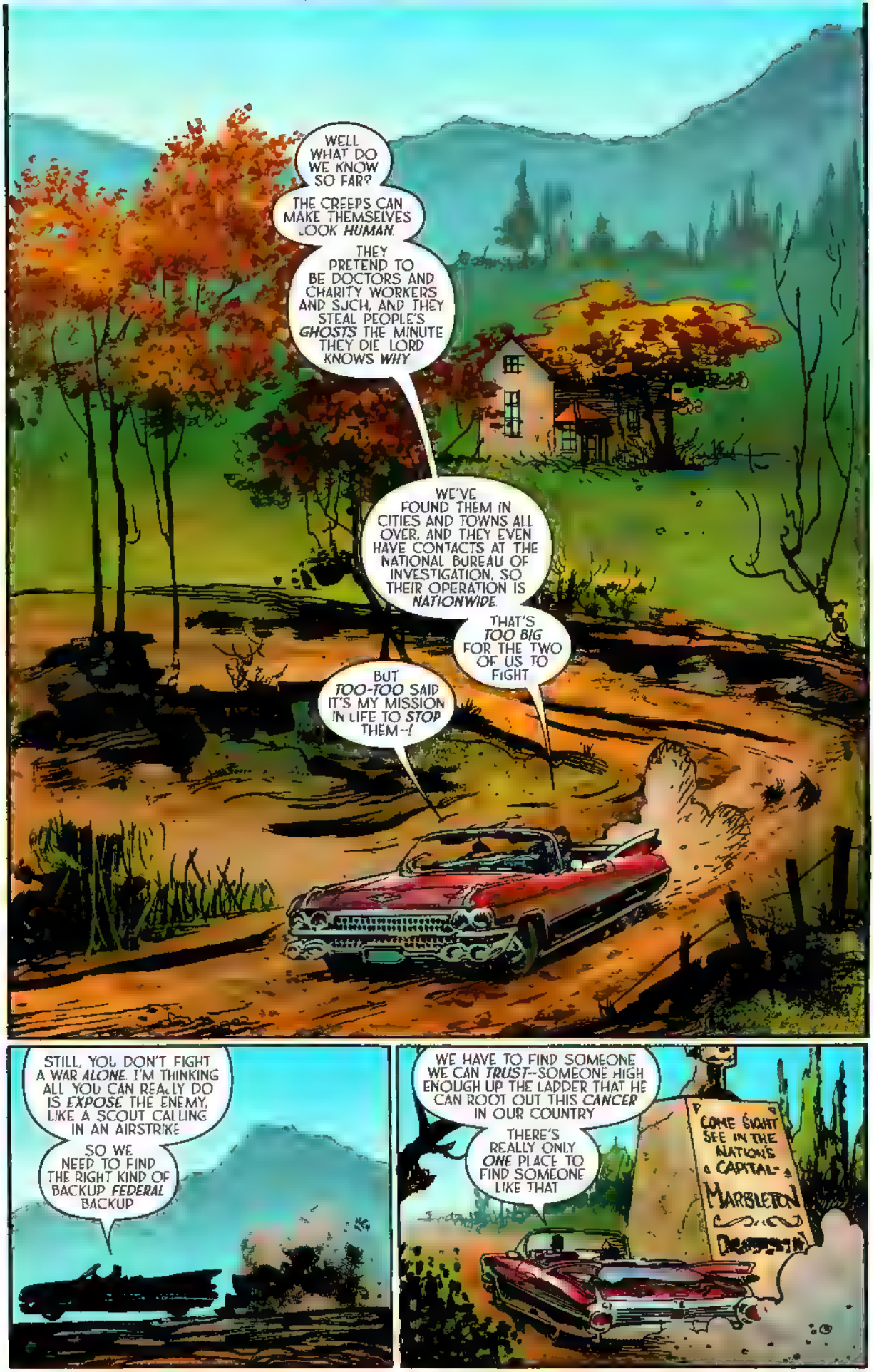
TELL YOU WHAT WE'LL MAKE A BET
I BET THIS GENT..EMAN, MISTER
W-WARDELL
I BET YOU THAT MISTER WARDELL
CAN DRINK SIX OF THESE FILLED WITH GASOLINE
IF HE DOES, THEN HIS CHILD GOES HOME ALIVE, I HIT THE ROAD, AND YOU TELL THE ADVERSARY WHAT HE CAN DO WITH HIS ORDERS
IF MISTER WARDELL FAILS TO FINISH THIS DRINKING CONTEST, THEN I'LL AGREE TO CATCH THE STARKWEATHER GIRL AND YOU'LL HAVE A NICE LIGHT LUNCH
DEAL?

I WON'T HAVE YOU MAKING A *GAME* OUT OF THIS!
Y'KNOW, IF YOU'D JUST PAY *ATTENTION*, YOU'D SEE THAT I'M TRYING TO DO YOU A *FAVOR*
I'M TEACHING YOU A *LESSON* ABOUT WHY THE ADVERSARY THINKS I CAN *SUCCEED* WHERE YOU FAILED
HELL
BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND SOMETHING YOU *DON'T*, BY LETH
PSSSS
THAT THESE *CATTLE* WE THINK SO LITTLE OF ARE CAPABLE OF FAR MORE THAN YOU'D EXPECT
PROVIDED THE RIGHT *MOTIVATION*
COME, WARDELL IT'S TIME TO SAVE YOUR *BOY*
Red Neck BEER


WHAT DID YOU DO WITH LANNY?
BOTTOMS UP

WAITAMINUTE
I SUGGEST THAT YOU NOT *BREATHE* UNTIL AFTER YOU DOWN THE *ENTIRE* BOTTLE
CAN'T HAVE YOU COUGHING THAT STUFF UP AND BLOWING THE *BET*


SO WHAT *NOW*, CISCO? HOOK UP WITH THE *POTTERFIELD CIRCUS* AGAIN?
I KEEP ASKING MYSELF THE SAME THING, CASSIE
THINGS ARE A LITTLE BETTER NOW THAT THE LAW ISN'T AFTER YOU ANYMORE, BUT THOSE *THINGS* MUST'VE PUT A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD BY NOW
I'M AFRAID THAT IF WE TRY TO HIDE OUT WITH THE POTTERFIELDS WE'LL JUST BRING THE MONSTERS DOWN ON *THEM*, TOO
WELL WE CAN'T JUST KEEP *DRIVING* FOREVER! THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO *END* ALL THIS!


WELL WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?
THE CREEPS CAN MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK *HUMAN*.
THEY PRETEND TO BE DOCTORS AND CHARITY WORKERS AND SUCH, AND THEY STEAL PEOPLE'S *GHOSTS* THE MINUTE THEY DIE. LORD KNOWS *WHY*.
WE'VE FOUND THEM IN CITIES AND TOWNS ALL OVER, AND THEY EVEN HAVE CONTACTS AT THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, SO THEIR OPERATION IS *NATIONWIDE*.
THAT'S *TOO BIG* FOR THE TWO OF US TO FIGHT
BUT *TOO-TOO* SAID IT'S MY MISSION IN LIFE TO *STOP* THEM--!
STILL, YOU DON'T FIGHT A WAR *ALONE*. I'M THINKING ALL YOU CAN REALLY DO IS *EXPOSE* THE ENEMY, LIKE A SCOUT CALLING IN AN AIRSTRIKE
SO WE NEED TO FIND THE RIGHT KIND OF BACKUP. *FEDERAL* BACKUP
WE HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE WE CAN *TRUST*--SOMEONE HIGH ENOUGH UP THE LADDER THAT HE CAN ROOT OUT THIS *CANCER* IN OUR COUNTRY
THERE'S REALLY ONLY *ONE* PLACE TO FIND SOMEONE LIKE THAT
COME SIGHT SEE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL
MARBLETON

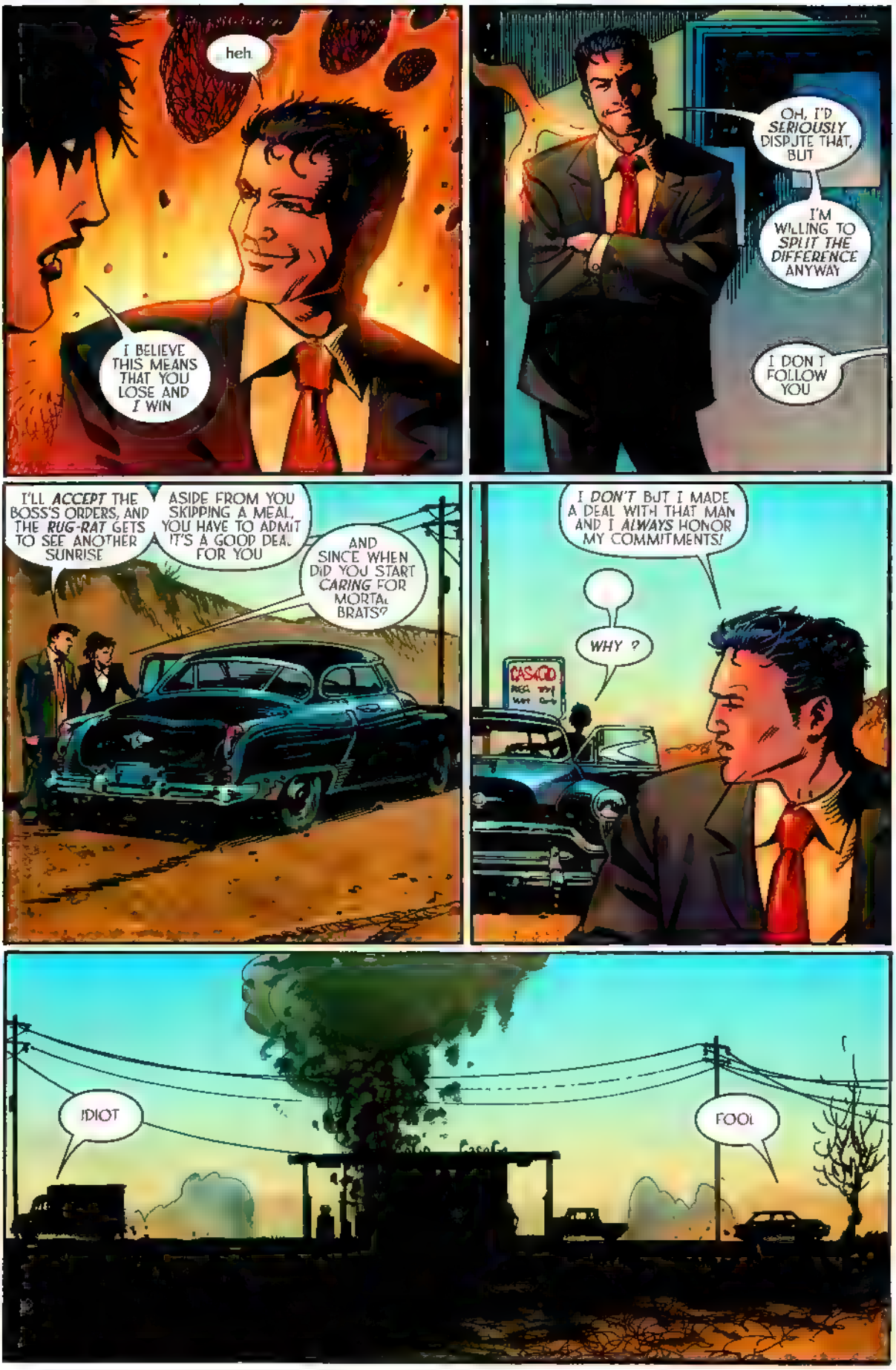
GAHHH-K-K-YAAHHH!
=HKK=
=KAKH=
OH, GOD IT HURTSSS--!
NO MORE =KAKH= PLEEEASE
THAT'S IT HE CAPITULATES I WIN YOUR FOOLISH BET, TENEBRION
IT'S TANNER
AND DON'T BE SO HASTY
CONSIDER IT A MIRACLE THAT HE FORCED DOWN FIVE OF THOSE THINGS! MOST HUMANS COULDN'T TAKE MORE THAN A SIP!
BUT THAT IS ULTIMATELY ALL HE IS. ONLY HUMAN

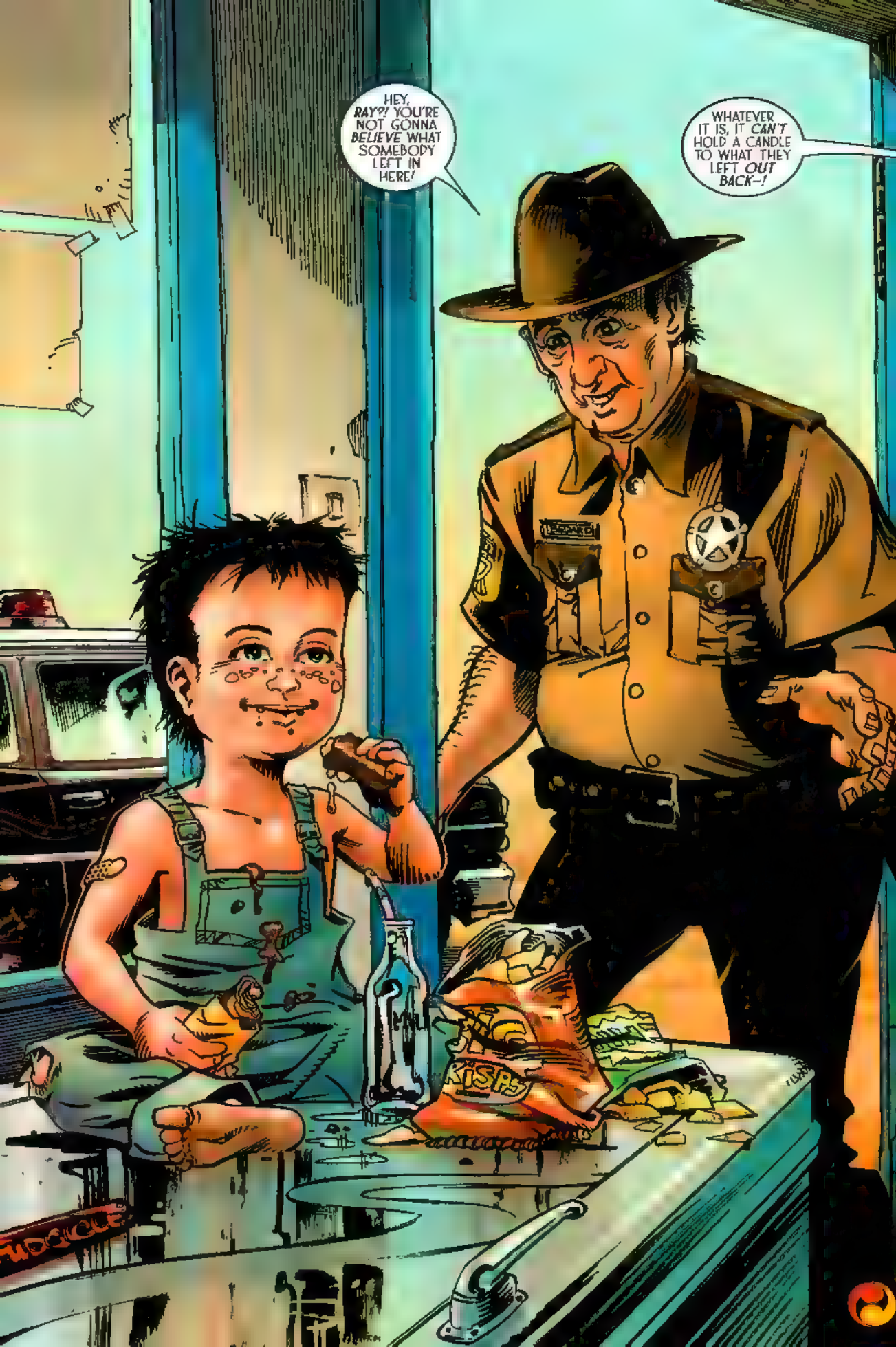
MISTER WARDELL, YOU'VE COME THIS FAR YOU'VE ALREADY THROWN YOUR LIFE AWAY IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME
BUT IF YOU DIE NOW, IT'S ALL FOR NOTHING
I KNOW YOU CAN'T SEE HIM ANYMORE, BUT YOUR SON IS OUT IN THAT TRUCK AND HE'S COUNTING ON YOU
THAT'S IT! MAKE YOUR SACRIFICE COUNT!
=GG-HAKK= Oohhhh

AND THAT, BYLETH, IS WHY YOU FAILED TO CATCH A SIMPLE HUMAN GIRL
BECAUSE YOU UNDERESTIMATE THEM, WHILE THEY EXIST TO EXCEED THEIR L.M TATIONS
BRAAAPP--
=WHEEZE=
THERE NAH, SHAVE MUH SUNNN
YOU JUST DID, MISTER WARDELL YOU SAVED HIM
WELL DONE
PITY WE WON'T BE WORKING TOGETHER, BYLETH
OPERATOR, SEND A POLICE CAR TO THE GAS'N'GO ON STATE ROAD TWENTY
WE HAVE TWO DEAD, AND A CHILD WITH HEAT-STROKE
LOOK, TANNER EVER HEAR THEIR OLD SAYING ABOUT "COUNTING YOUR EGGS" ?
?
NNHHH

GAHHH!
GUKH
HUKK...
HUKK...
BLORGGG!
PLOOSH
GET BACK!
FWOOSH

"WELL DONE" INDEED
HAHAHAHA HAHAHA HAHA


heh
I BELIEVE THIS MEANS THAT YOU LOSE AND I WIN
OH, I'D SERIOUSLY DISPUTE THAT, BUT
I'M WILLING TO SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE ANYWAY
I DON'T FOLLOW YOU
I'LL ACCEPT THE BOSS'S ORDERS, AND THE RUG-RAT GETS TO SEE ANOTHER SUNRISE
ASIDE FROM YOU SKIPPING A MEAL, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT IT'S A GOOD DEAL FOR YOU
AND SINCE WHEN DID YOU START CARING FOR MORTAL BRATS?
I DON'T BUT I MADE A DEAL WITH THAT MAN AND I ALWAYS HONOR MY COMMITMENTS!
WHY ?
CASICO
IDIOT
FOOL


HEY, RAY?! YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE WHAT SOMEBODY LEFT IN HERE!
WHATEVER IT IS, IT CAN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO WHAT THEY LEFT OUT BACK--!
KISPY

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#16

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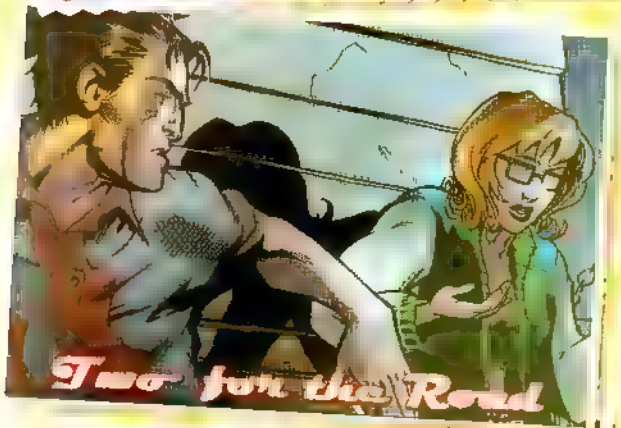


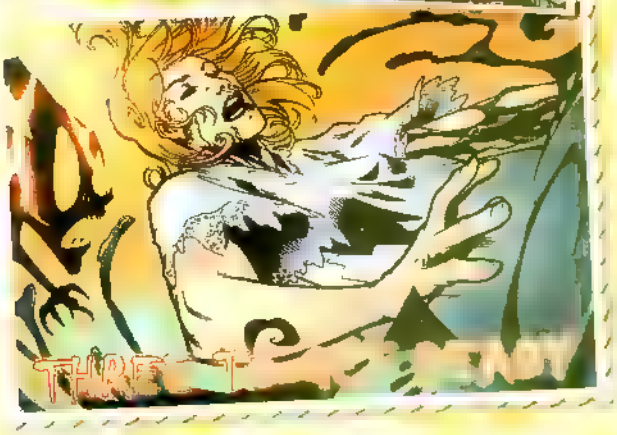

DEAR MOM AND DAD,

SORRY ABOUT YOUR RECENT VISIT FROM THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION. THOSE AGENTS TOOK YOU INTO CUSTODY BECAUSE THEY HAD PROBLEMS WITH ME... BUT THEN YOU PROBABLY FIGURED THAT OUT RIGHT OFF. ANYHOW, MY FRIEND CISCO AND AGENT MELCHIOR AT THE N.B.I. GOT IT ALL STRAIGHTENED OUT, AND ALL CHARGES AGAINST ME HAVE BEEN DROPPED.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT ONLY SOLVES HALF THE PROBLEM. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MELCHIOR TOLD YOU, BUT THERE'S A CERTAIN GROUP OPERATING ALL OVER EMPYREAN THAT'S A THREAT TO OUR COUNTRY. THAT LOOKS STUPID NOW THAT I WRITE IT, BUT IT'D JUST SOUND EVEN WORSE IF I WENT INTO DETAIL ABOUT IT. JUST TRUST ME: CISCO AND I CAN'T GO HOME UNTIL WE GET SOME HELP AGAINST THESE "PEOPLE."

CISCO'S A SHERIFF BACK IN GOSSMER. YOU'D LIKE HIM - HE LOOKS OUT FOR ME. WE NEED SOMEBODY IN THE GOVERNMENT WITH ENOUGH PULL TO FIGHT WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, SO WE'RE HEADED TO MARBLETON TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL LISTEN. WE'RE DRIVING ACROSS MILLSTON, THEN UP THE COAST, SO IT'LL TAKE A FEW DAYS. I'LL WRITE AGAIN WHEN WE GET THERE.

SORRY, I CAN'T COME HOME UNTIL THIS IS OVER. UNTIL THEN, JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL LOCK YOUR DOORS AND WINDOWS AT NIGHT.

LOVE,
CASSIE

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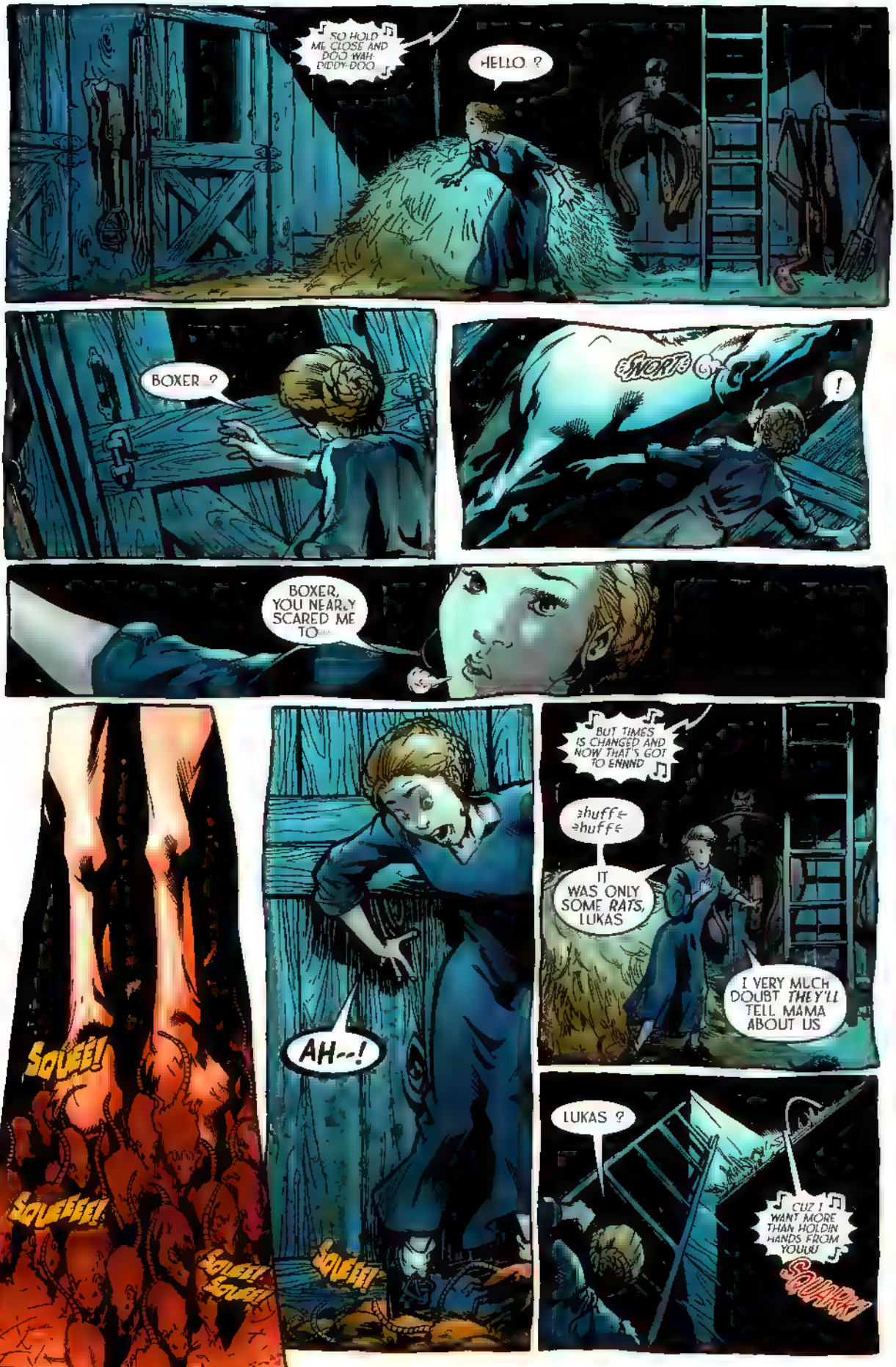
LUKAS, COME ON--! QUICK, BEFORE SOMEONE SEES
WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT, SARA?
I TOLD YOU, IT'S A SURPRISE
PROMISE YOU'LL NOT TELL ANYONE?

REMEMBER THE TIME AT *MARKET*, WHEN WE HEARD THAT "*doo-wah*" SONG PLAYING IN AN OUTLANDER'S MOTOR-CARRIAGE ?
SARA, YOU *DIDN'T*
YOU'VE BROKEN THE *ORDNUNG*—!
ELDER KLAASON WILL *UNCHURCH* US FOR THIS IF YOUR MOTHER DOESN'T TAN OUR *HIDES* FIRST
THEY'RE CALLED THE "*KAY-TELLS*." I MUST HAVE PLAYED IT *FIFTEEN TIMES* WHEN I SNUCK IN HERE LAST NIGHT!
SARA, DID YOU NOT HEAR WHAT I *SAID*?
KAY-TELLS
SOUL FOOD

YES, LUKAS, I HEARD
WHRRRRRRRR
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO LISTEN
♪ SINCE WE WAS LITTLE YOU WAS MY BEST FRIENNND ♫
♫ BUT TIMES IS CHANGED AND NOW THAT'S GOT TO ENNND ♪
♫ CUZ I WANTS MORE THAN HOLDIN HANDS FROM YOUUU ♪

SO HOLD ME CLOSE AND DOO WAH DIDDY-DOO
DOO-WAH WAH-WAH DOO-WAH DIDDY DOO
SNORT
CLOP CLOP
SOMETHING SPOOKED THE HORSES
THEY'RE ALWAYS LIKE THAT
I KNOW THIS WASN'T WHAT YOU 'SPECT FROM MEEE
NO, REALLY, SARA
WOULD YOUR MOTHER COME OUT TO THE BARN THIS LATE ?
BUT I NEED YOU, THAT'S HOW IT'S GOT TO BEEE
LUKAS VAN CREVELD, I HOPE YOU WON'T BE SUCH A WORRY-WART ONCE WE'RE MARRIED~!
AND DEEP DOWN I KNOW, THAT YOU WANT ME, TOOO.
MARRIED ?!


♫ SO HOLD ME CLOSE AND DOO-WAH-DIDDY-DOO ♫
HELLO ?
BOXER ?
SNORT!
!
BOXER, YOU NEARLY SCARED ME TO...
SQUEE!
SQUEEEE!
SQUEE! SQUEE!
AH--!
SQUEE!
♫ BUT TIMES IS CHANGED AND NOW THAT'S GOT TO ENNND ♫
=huff=
=huff=
IT WAS ONLY SOME RATS, LUKAS
I VERY MUCH DOUBT THEY'LL TELL MAMA ABOUT US
LUKAS ?
♫ CUZ I WANT MORE THAN HOLDIN HANDS FROM YOUUU ♫
SQUARK!

BURN, SINNER!
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
EEEEEEEEE!

FOUR HOURS EARLIER:
NEWSFLASH, CASSIE--THIS AIN'T THE NTERSTATE
HEY, I NEVER MADE ANY GUARANTEES
"I'M THE SHORCUT QUEEN, CISCO! GIMME THE MAP!"
IT'S SAFE TO SAY YOUR MENTAL POWERS DON'T COVER ROAD-TRIPS
SAY "PSYCHIC" MENTAL MAKES ME SOUND WELL, MENTAL
LET'S ASK THIS GUY FOR DIRECTIONS
DID WE TAKE A U-TURN IN TIME OR SOMETHING?
WE'RE, um...A LITTLE BIT LOST
WE WERE TRYING TO CUT OVER FROM STATE ROAD ONE-OH THREE TO .NTERSTATE TWENTY-SEVEN BUT

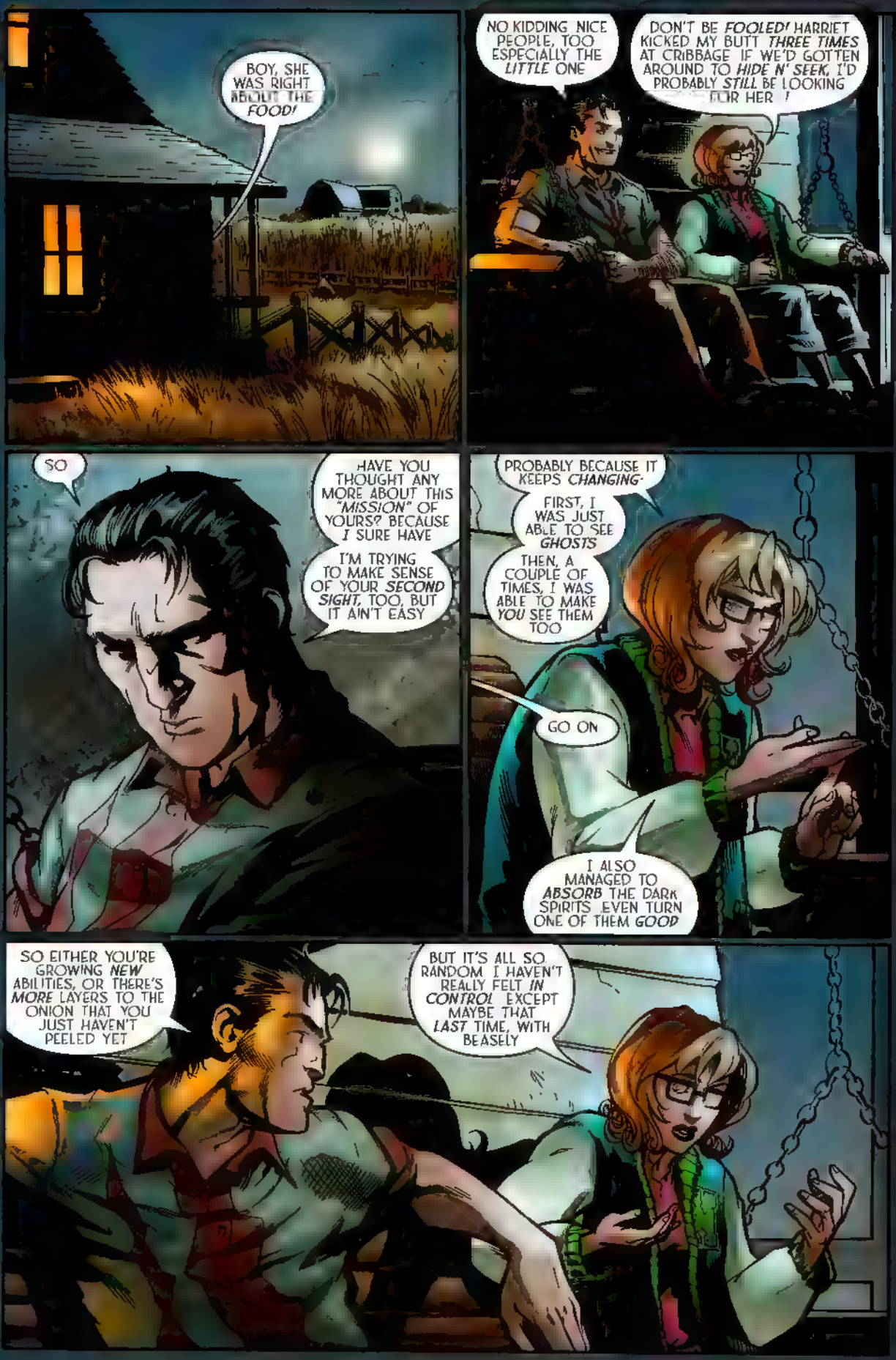
SORRY I'LL NOT BE MUCH HELP GETTING YOU TO A PARTICULAR *HIGHWAY*
THIS BUGGY OF MINE AND MOTOR-COACH SPEEDWAYS WERE NOT EXACTLY *MADE* FOR EACH OTHER
GO DOWN THE ROAD ANOTHER FIVE MILES, YOU'LL FIND WIDOW ELLIS' *BED AND BREAKFAST*
SHE'S *PLAIN* FOLK, LIKE MYSELF, BUT I AM CERTAIN SHE'LL KNOW THE PROPER ROUTE BACK TO THE *OUTSIDE*
THOUGH I'D SLOW DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO *SAVOR* OUR LITTLE CORNER OF CREATION BEFORE LEAVING IT BEHIND
¡GRACIAS, SEÑOR!
GODSPEED!
SO, DID FOLKS AROUND HERE SLEEP THROUGH THE LAST *CENTURY*, OR WHAT?
THIS IS *REAPER COUNTRY*, CASSIE. YOU NEVER HEARD OF THE REAPERS? WHAT'RE THEY TEACHING IN SCHOOL THESE DAYS?
THESE PEOPLE *CHOOSE* THE SIMPLE LIFE. THEY'VE GOT NO USE FOR THE *RAT RACE*. WE COULD TAKE A PAGE FROM THEIR BOOK, IF YOU ASK ME

WELCOME, TRAVELERS! WILL YOU BE NEEDING ROOMS FOR THE NIGHT?
ACTUALLY, WE JUST WANTED DIRECTIONS, BUT THE TRUTH IS I AM PRETTY SADDLE-SORE. WHAT'CHA THINK, CASSIE?
PLEASE DO STAY! WE'LL PLAY CRIBBAGE AND HIDE N' SEEK
WELL YOU'LL HAVE TO TEACH ME CRIBBAGE, BUT I CAN PROBABLY HANDLE THE REST...
PLEASE FORGIVE HARRIET, MISS WE SELDOM HAVE VISITORS IN THE OFF-SEASON
HELLO I'M SARA.
SO, NO TEEVEE, huh?
I'M AFRAID ONE WOULD REQUIRE ELECTRICITY FOR SUCH A THING
YOU'LL SURVIVE A NIGHT WITHOUT THE BOOB TUBE, MIJA
THE ORDNUNG FORBIDS CERTAIN CONTRIVANCES THAT INTERFERE WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
WHO'S THE "ORDNUNG" ?
OUR CODE OF CONDUCT IT TELLS US WHAT CLOTHES ARE APPROPRIATE, HOW TO LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER, AND SO ON
THERE IS A ROOM DOWN THE HALL FOR YOU, SIR. YOUR DAUGHTER MAY STAY IN THIS ONE
I THINK YOU'LL BOTH FIND THAT THE PLAIN LIFE DOESN'T REALLY WANT FOR ANYTHING AND THE FOOD IS JUST PLAIN GOOD

STRENGTH, VIKTOR! YOU FACED FIRING SQUAD BEFORE
ROUTE 666
HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WILL BE GREAT, BUT AFTER ALL, HOW BAD CAN IT BE ?
ahhh
NICE KNOWING YOU, SUVOROV!
GO TO HELL
ALREADY THERE, PAL!

COME HERE, MY VICIOUS LITTLE PET...
LORD ADVERSARY ?
NOT YOU, SUVOROV. I AM SPEAKING TO YOUR NEW PARTNER.
THEN
YOU WILL NOT BE DESTROYING ME ?
VIKTOR, VIKTOR...THAT WOULD BE A WASTE OF ENERGY...
I DID CONSIDER THROWING YOU BACK IN THE...WHAT WAS IT BEASELY CALLED IT? THE BUG JAR?
YOU KNOW, I THINK I SHALL ACTUALLY MISS HIM--

I EXPECT HIS REPLACEMENT HERE TO BE LESS PRONE TO FAILURE, CONSIDERING HIS CRIMES WHILE HE WAS STILL ALIVE...
WHO WAS HE?
SOMEONE WHO MADE YOU LOOK LIKE A MILKMAID, COMRADE
NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET STUCK WORKING WITH A COMMIE, BUT, THEN, A LOT ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE ISN'T WHAT I EXPECTED
IT SELDOM IS, DARK SPIRIT, BUT THAT'S NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN.
ALL YOU MUST ATTEND TO NOW IS THE COLLECTION OF SOULS FROM EREBUS...
...AND THE CAPTURE OF ONE RATHER TROUBLESOME GIRL...


BOY, SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE FOOD!
NO KIDDING NICE PEOPLE, TOO ESPECIALLY THE LITTLE ONE
DON'T BE FOOLED! HARRIET KICKED MY BUTT THREE TIMES AT CRIBBAGE IF WE'D GOTTEN AROUND TO HIDE N' SEEK, I'D PROBABLY STILL BE LOOKING FOR HER !
SO
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ANY MORE ABOUT THIS "MISSION" OF YOURS? BECAUSE I SURE HAVE
I'M TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF YOUR SECOND SIGHT, TOO, BUT IT AIN'T EASY
PROBABLY BECAUSE IT KEEPS CHANGING·
FIRST, I WAS JUST ABLE TO SEE GHOSTS
THEN, A COUPLE OF TIMES, I WAS ABLE TO MAKE YOU SEE THEM TOO
GO ON
I ALSO MANAGED TO ABSORB THE DARK SPIRITS EVEN TURN ONE OF THEM GOOD
SO EITHER YOU'RE GROWING NEW ABILITIES, OR THERE'S MORE LAYERS TO THE ONION THAT YOU JUST HAVEN'T PEELED YET
BUT IT'S ALL SO RANDOM I HAVEN'T REALLY FELT IN CONTROL EXCEPT MAYBE THAT LAST TIME, WITH BEASELY

PARDON, BUT YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SEE SARA OUT HERE, DID YOU?
NO, MA'AM IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
Oh I'M SURE IT IS. GOOD NIGHT
SO, ANYHOW YOU FELT MORE IN CONTROL LAST TIME THAT'S PROGRESS, RIGHT? YOU'RE GETTING THE HANG OF IT
WHATEVER "IT" IS
shh. YOU HEAR THAT ?
...
YEAH IS THAT A RADIO?
GUESS WE KNOW WHERE SARA DISAPPEARED TO
ISN'T SHE BREAKING THEIR CODE-THINGIE ?
YUP TOO BAD T'S FOR SUCH JUNK MUSIC
THAT'S THE KAY-TELLS--! WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE, ANYWAY?
BIG BAND ESPECIALLY FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER AT LEAST THAT STUFF YOU CAN DANCE TO
HOW CAN YOU NOT DANCE TO THIS SONG? C'MON I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DANCE WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE AN ABSOLUTE SQUARE

SEE ? YOU GOTTA SWING A LITTLE
YOU CALL THAT A LITTLE?
C'MERE AND I'LL SHOW YOU REAL DANCING
NOTICE HOW THIS ONE ACTUALLY GOES TO THE BEAT?
SLOW QUICK QUICK SLOW QUICK QUICK
MY DAD USED TO DANCE ME AROUND ON THE TOPS OF HIS SHOES
YEAH ? Y'KNOW, I HAVEN'T DANCED WITH ANYONE SINCE BLANCA PASSED AWAY
EEEEEEEE!

SARA!
WHERE ARE YOU, KID?
IT WAS HIM!
HIM WHO?
ELDER DYZAN! THE GHOST!
Oh, SWEET LORD, LOOK WHAT HE'S DONE TO LUKAS--!
nnnhhh
IT'S TRUE, CISCO I CAN FEEL HIM! HE'S STILL NEAR!
CASSIE GET BACK HERE!
IT'S OKAY! I'M PRETTY SURE I CAN HANDLE HIM THE SAME WAY I DID BEASELY!

Uh-huh.
WELL YOU'RE NOT QUITE THE *UGLIEST* GHOST I'VE EVER SEEN
BUT YOU'RE DEFINITELY THE *WORST* DRESSER!
I'M NOT SURE WHY YOU DIDN'T *MOVE ON* ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO
BUT I CAN *POINT* YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

whoa. YOU'RE NOT
WHAT IN THE WORLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU WERE STILL ALIVE ?
WHUNG
HEY! ANSWER ME!

DID YOU *FIND* IT?
YEAH, BUT
THAT'S NO *ORDINARY* GHOST, CISCO
WHAT *HAPPENED*? I HEARD *SCREAMS*.
IT WAS *ELDER DYZAN*, MA'AM.
HE *JUDGED* ME
I SAW HIM, *TOO*. HE WAS HEADED FOR YOUR *HOUSE*
DEAR LORD-- *HARRIET*!
I SENT HER TO BED AN *HOUR* AGO, BUT
WE'LL *FIND* HER!

HARRIET--?!
I'LL TAKE THE DOWNSTAIRS
RIGHT IF YOU SEE THIS THING, CISCO, DON'T GO NEAR HIM!
HARRIET?
HARRIET ?

KLATTR
RUSTLE-RUSTLE
≥sigh≤
GEE .I WONDER WHERE HARRIET COULD BE ?
GIGGLE
KLUNK
RUSTLE
ALL RIGHT, COME ON OUT OF THERE WE CAN PLAY HIDE N' SEEK LATER.
RIGHT NOW YOUR MOTHER IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU~

CASSIE ? WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* IN MY ROOM ?
AND WHO ARE YOU *TALKING* TO?
GIGGLE

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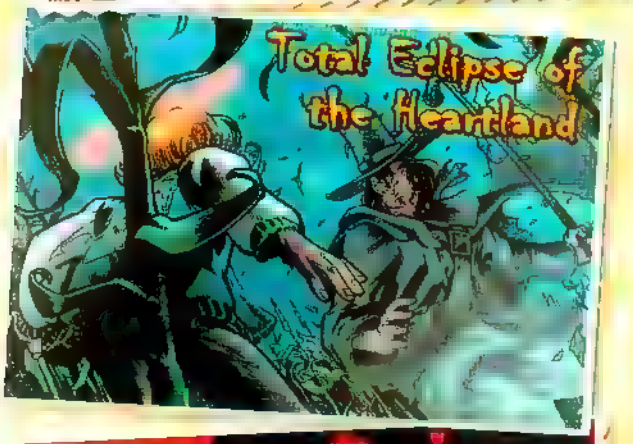
# Greetings From... MILLSTON

## "THE AMBER WAVES STATE"



DEAR AGENT MELCHIOR,

I KNOW I'M THE LAST PERSON YOU WANT TO HEAR FROM, EVEN THOUGH YOU DID GET ME DROPPED FROM THE MOST WANTED LIST (THANKS!). BUT I HAVE TO ASK YOU FOR ONE MORE FAVOR. ME AND CISCO ARE ON OUR WAY UP TO MARBLETON TO SEE IF ANYONE IN THE GOVERNMENT CAN ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT ALL OUR FANGED AND FURRY "VISITORS" FROM PERDITION. WE'RE HOPING YOU MIGHT HELP US FIND A FRIENDLY EAR, SINCE YOU WORK THERE.

IN THE MEANTIME, IT SEEMS LIKE WE CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT SOME SORT OF SUPERNATURAL PROBLEM FALLING IN OUR LAP. WE STOPPED IN REAPER COUNTRY, WHERE FOLKS LIVE LIKE THEY NEVER HEARD OF CARS AND LIGHT BULBS, AND STAYED WITH A NICE LADY, WIDOW ELLIS, AND HER DAUGHTERS, SARA AND HARRIET. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GHOST OF ELDER DYZAN — THE MAN WHO FOUNDED THE REAPER SECT — WAS STILL HANGING AROUND, SCARING THE WITS OUT OF THOSE POOR FOLKS, AND EVEN BURNING THE ONES WHO BROKE HIS LAWS — A SET OF RULES THEY CALL THE "ORDNUNG."

ANYHOW, I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS WHEN WE SEE YOU. SUFFICE TO SAY THAT THIS WAS NO ORDINARY GHOST. AS IF A GHOST IS EVER ORDINARY! WHAT'S MORE, THERE'S A NEW DARK SPIRIT WHO'S EITHER MESSING WITH MY HEAD, OR...WELL, I'LL EXPLAIN WHEN WE SEE YOU!

TAKE CARE,
CASSIE

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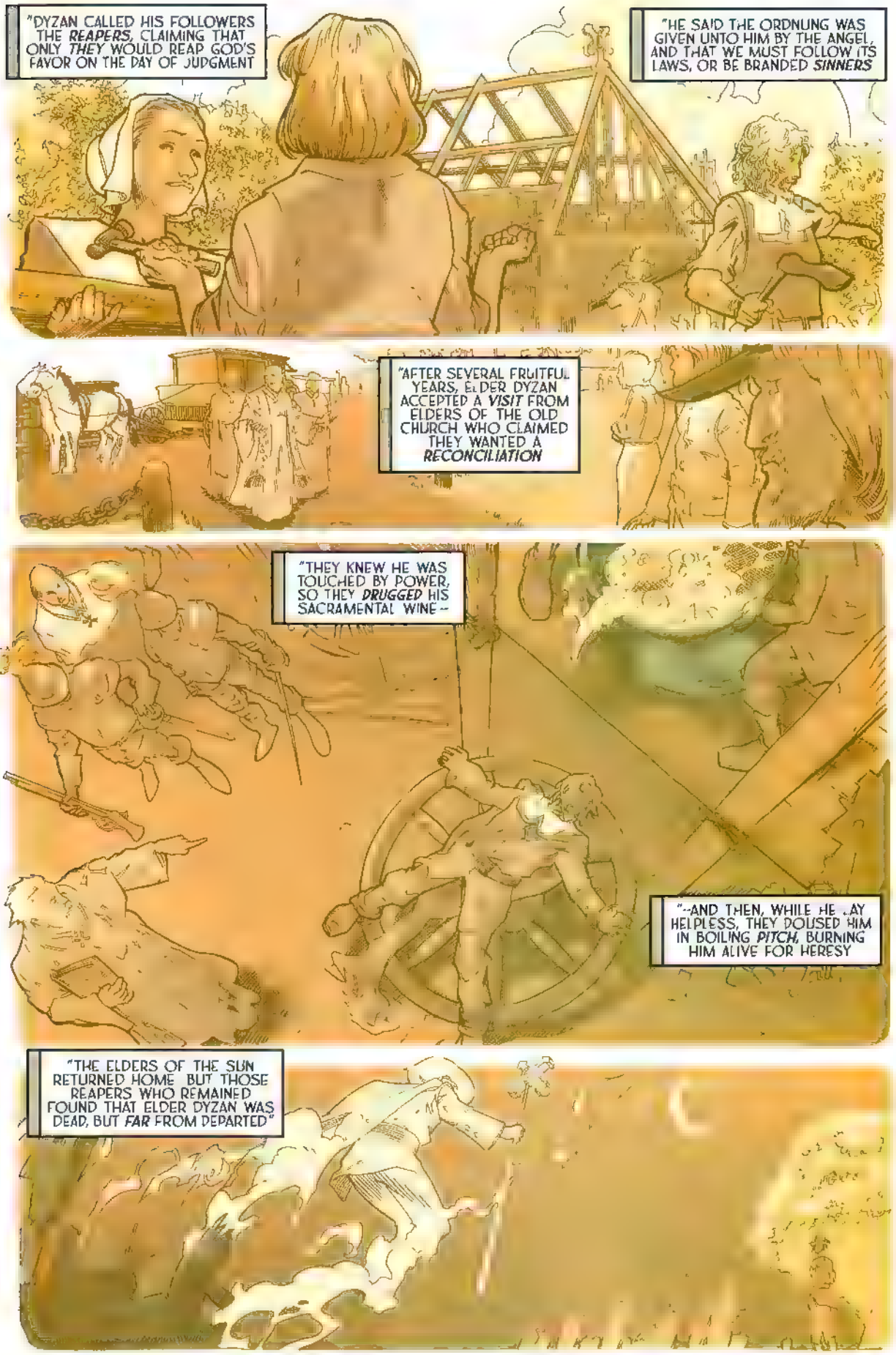
CASSIEEEE...!

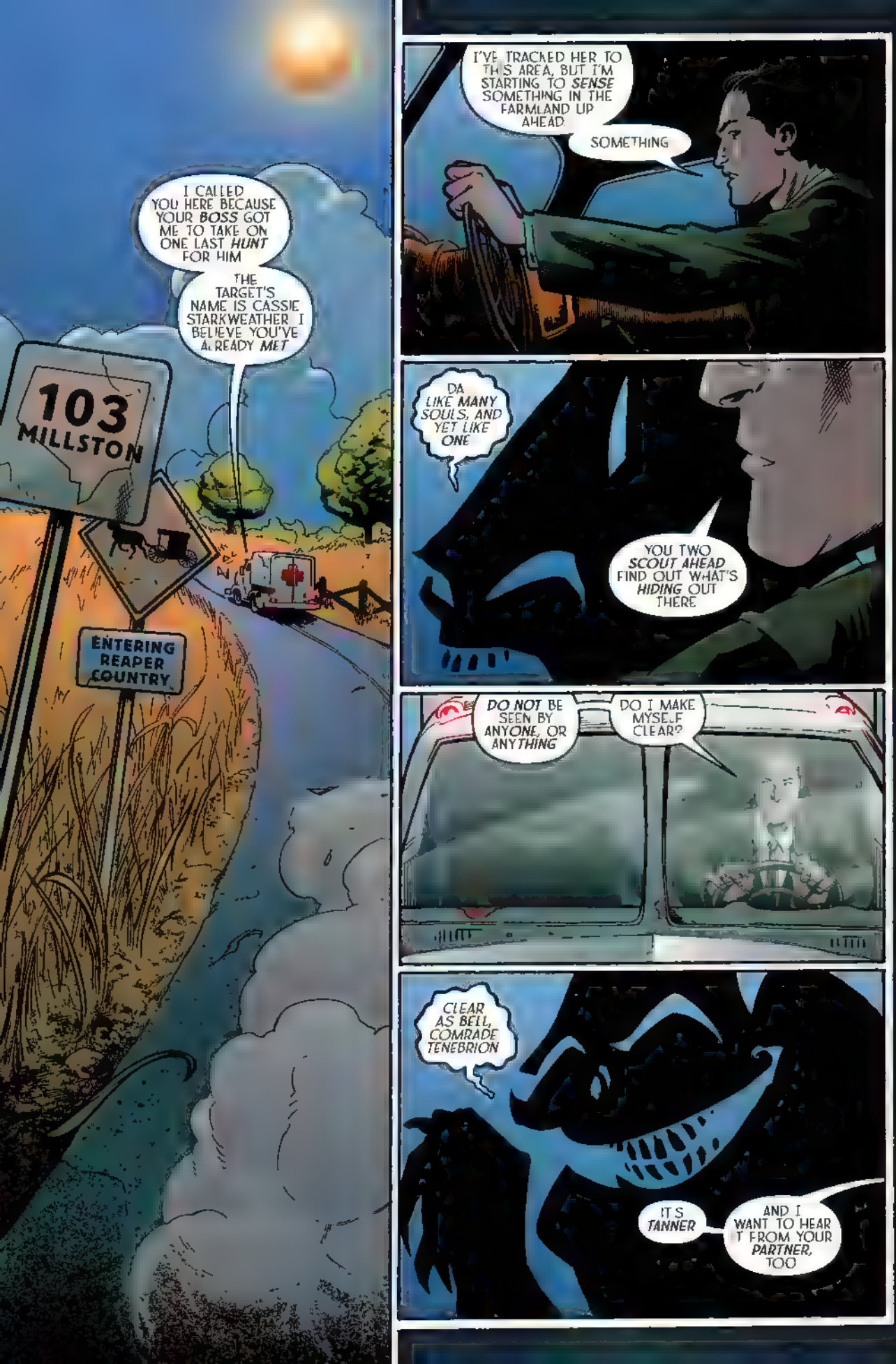
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
HOLY GOD--!
AAAAAH!

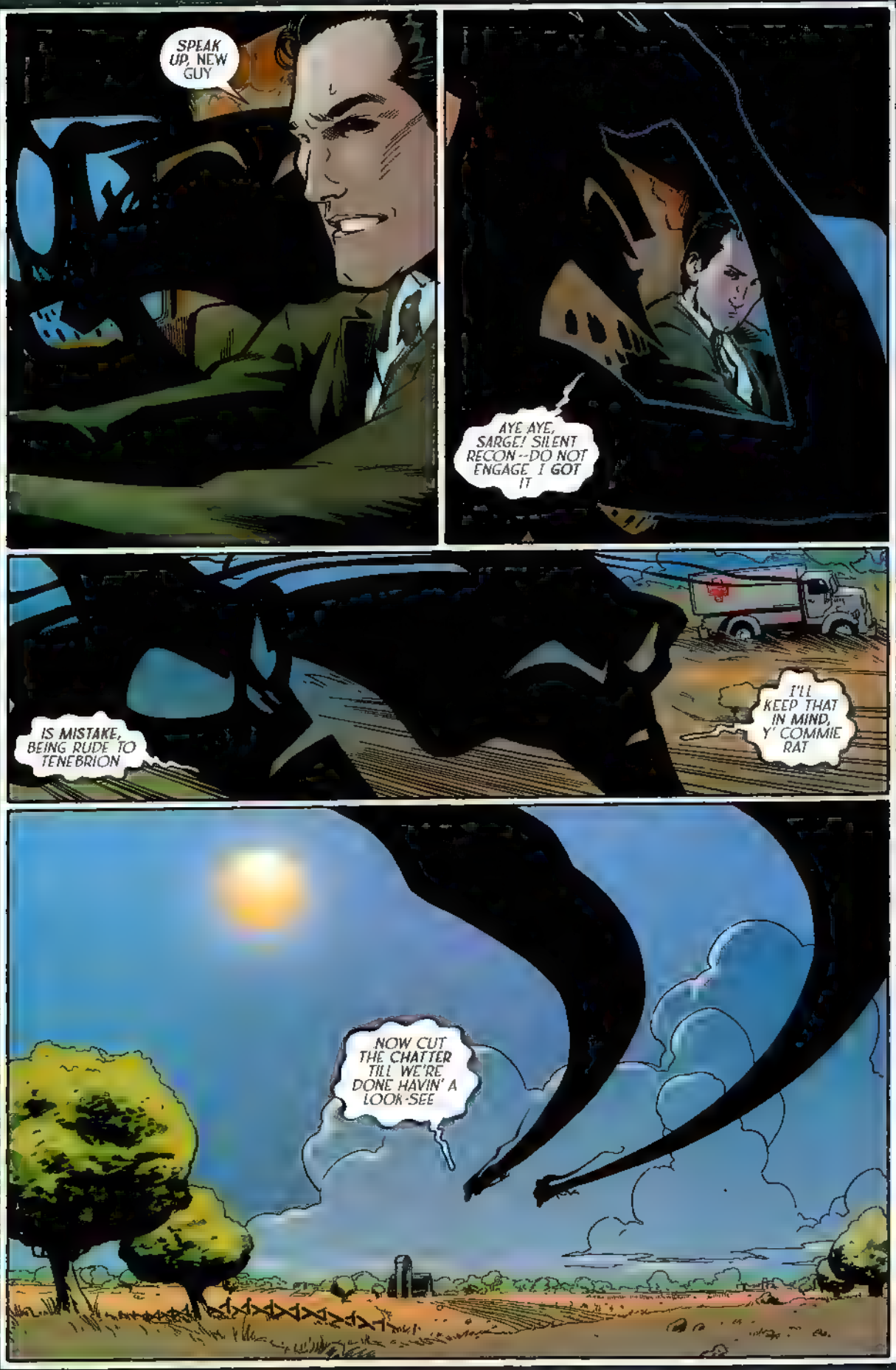
CASSIE--?!
Whoa!
HE HAS HER IN MY BEDROOM!
KID ? YOU ALL RIGHT ?
I I'M NOT SURE
WHERE'S THE GHOST?
HE LEFT JUST DISAPPEARED RIGHT AFTER HE
CISCO ? TELL ME THE TRUTH
HOW HOW BAD IS IT ?

HARRIET! PRAISE GOD YOU'RE SAFE!
ELDER DYZAN BURNED CASSIE!
HE PUNISHED LUKAS, TOO.
I WAS ALWAYS AFRAID THIS MIGHT HAPPEN--THAT AN OUTSIDER MIGHT SUFFER FOR OUR SINS..
AND SHE WAS SUCH A LOVELY GIRL
WELL, THAT'S THE FUNNY THING, WIDOW ELLIS
...SHE STILL IS. YOUR BOGEY MAN TRIED TO BURN HER, BUT SOMEHOW IT DIDN'T WORK
AND NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING I DID. HE CAME AT ME SO FAST
I FELT THE WEIGHT ON MY FACE, HEARD THE SIZZLE AND THE TOUCH WAS SO COLD FOR A MINUTE I THOUGHT
IF IT WAS ALL JUST AN ACT, THEN MAYBE
COME ON, KID. LET'S TAKE A LOOK
O OKAY


"DYZAN CALLED HIS FOLLOWERS THE *REAPERS*, CLAIMING THAT ONLY *THEY* WOULD REAP GOD'S FAVOR ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT
"HE SAID THE ORDNUNG WAS GIVEN UNTO HIM BY THE ANGEL, AND THAT WE MUST FOLLOW ITS LAWS, OR BE BRANDED *SINNERS*
"AFTER SEVERAL FRUITFUL YEARS, ELDER DYZAN ACCEPTED A *VISIT* FROM ELDERS OF THE OLD CHURCH WHO CLAIMED THEY WANTED A *RECONCILIATION*
"THEY KNEW HE WAS TOUCHED BY POWER, SO THEY *DRUGGED* HIS SACRAMENTAL WINE --
"--AND THEN, WHILE HE LAY HELPLESS, THEY DOUSED HIM IN BOILING *PITCH*, BURNING HIM ALIVE FOR HERESY
"THE ELDERS OF THE SUN RETURNED HOME. BUT THOSE REAPERS WHO REMAINED FOUND THAT ELDER DYZAN WAS DEAD, BUT *FAR* FROM DEPARTED"

THE REAPER COMMUNITY ENDURED, AND WE *PROSPERED*, AND PARENTS TOLD THEIR CHILDREN THAT IF THEY DID NOT BEHAVE AND OBEY THE ORDNUNG
"ELDER DYZAN WILL GET YOU!"
FOR *MOST*, IT'S JUST AN OLD WIVES TALE AFTER ALL, WE LIVE LIKE THIS OUT OF *FAITH*, NOT FEAR
UNFORTUNATELY, ONCE IN A WHILE HE REMINDS US THAT HE IS *NOT* A WIVES TALE
I DON'T KNOW, CASSIE. I'D GOTTEN THE IMPRESSION GHOSTS DON'T TEND TO *STICK AROUND* TOO LONG BEFORE THEY, Y'KNOW, GO TO *HEAVEN*, OR WHEREVER
WELL, YEAH THAT'S WHAT *I* THOUGHT, TOO
SO HOW COME THIS *DYZAN* IS STILL AROUND AFTER *TWO CENTURIES?*
*SHE* SAID HE WAS FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, OR *SOMESUCH*
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE HE HAD A *GIFT*.. Y'KNOW, LIKE ME? OR MAYBE HIS LIFEFORCE WAS SOMEHOW *SOUPED UP* ?
SO HIS GHOST WOULD *HOLD TOGETHER* LONGER THAN A NORMAL PERSON'S
IS THAT GONNA HAPPEN TO *ME* AFTER I DIE ?


I CALLED YOU HERE BECAUSE YOUR BOSS GOT ME TO TAKE ON ONE LAST HUNT FOR HIM
THE TARGET'S NAME IS CASSIE STARKWEATHER. I BELIEVE YOU'VE ALREADY MET
103 MILLSTON
ENTERING REAPER COUNTRY
I'VE TRACKED HER TO THIS AREA, BUT I'M STARTING TO SENSE SOMETHING IN THE FARMLAND UP AHEAD
SOMETHING
DA. LIKE MANY SOULS, AND YET LIKE ONE
YOU TWO SCOUT AHEAD FIND OUT WHAT'S HIDING OUT THERE
DO NOT BE SEEN BY ANYONE, OR ANYTHING
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?
CLEAR AS BELL, COMRADE TENEBRION
IT'S TANNER
AND I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOUR PARTNER, TOO


SPEAK UP, NEW GUY
AYE AYE, SARGE! SILENT RECON--DO NOT ENGAGE. I GOT IT
IS MISTAKE, BEING RUDE TO TENEBRION
I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND, Y' COMMIE RAT
NOW CUT THE CHATTER TILL WE'RE DONE HAVIN' A LOOK-SEE

SO, YOU PEOPLE LIVE IN YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD, WITH YOUR OWN CHURCH, YOUR OWN LAWS AND YOUR OWN MONSTER TO PUNISH WHOEVER BREAKS THEM!
I COULDN'T STICK AROUND HERE, KNOWING THAT CREEP WAS ALWAYS WATCHING
IT ISN'T LIKE THAT, MISTER FERNANDEZ OUR LIVES DO NOT REVOLVE AROUND A SPECTRE WHO ISN'T SEEN FOR YEARS AT A TIME
WE ARE A PEOPLE OF FAITH. WE DO NOT NEED TO BE THREATENED TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT--!
FAITH
SUPPOSE THAT'S WHY HE CAN BURN REAPERS, BUT NOT US OUTSIDE FOLKS
Huh?
THEY BELIEVE HE'S SOME KINDA PROPHET OR SOMETHING, SO THEY GET BURNED
YOU SEE HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS: A DEAD JERK WHO'S OUTSTAYED HIS WELCOME. SO YOU'RE IMMUNE
YOU GOTTA ADMIT, THERE'S A CERTAIN LOGIC TO IT
WHAT IF...
CASSIE, ONCE OR TWICE YOU'VE MADE ME SEE THINGS AS YOU SEE 'EM. HOW MANY PEOPLE AT A TIME DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DO THAT TO?
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT ?
IF YOU COULD REACH OUT WITH THAT SECOND SIGHT OF YOURS AND OPEN THE EYES OF EVERY REAPER
...SHOW 'EM WHO AND WHAT THEIR FOUNDING FATHER REALLY IS.
MAYBE THEN HIS HOLD ON THESE PEOPLE CAN BE BROKEN!
MAYBE THEN HE WON'T HANG AROUND BURNING KIDS!

CISCO, DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE *SAYING*?
YOU'RE TELLING ME TO WRECK THESE PEOPLE'S *FAITH!*
ISN'T THAT WHAT *KEEPS* THEM TOGETHER IN THE FIRST PLACE?
I MEAN, *YOU'RE* THE ONE WHO SAID ON THE WAY IN HOW MUCH YOU *ADMIRED* THEM !
NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO TURN THEM AGAINST THEIR OWN *FOUNDER?*
THE *MAN* WHO STARTED THE REAPERS DIED A LONG TIME AGO! THAT *THING* LURKING IN THE CROPS ISN'T WHAT KEEPS THESE PEOPLE TOGETHER!
AND *NOBODY* DESERVES *THIS!*
I CAN'T JUST *LEAVE* HERE KNOWING IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN CAN *YOU?*
JUST WHAT EXACTLY CAN CASSIE *DO* AGAINST A GHOST?
*PLENTY* SHE HAS A GIFT, MA'AM SHE CAN EVEN TURN A *BAD* SPOOK INTO A *GOOD* ONE
IS THIS *TRUE?*
I ONLY DID IT *ONCE* BEFORE. I *TRIED* IT WITH DYZAN, BUT HE WAS STRONGER THAN I EXPECTED
IS HE TOO STRONG, *PERIOD?* OR WERE YOU SIMPLY CAUGHT OFF-GUARD?
I'M NOT SURE

CASSIE, IF THERE IS EVEN A CHANCE THAT YOU COULD TURN ELDER DYZAN'S SOUL AWAY FROM THE PATH OF DARKNESS..!
...
YEAH, OKAY. I'LL GIVE IT ANOTHER GO BUT IF I'M GONNA TAKE HIM ON AGAIN, FIRST HE HAS TO BE HERE
HE ONLY COMES TO PUNISH THOSE WHO BREAK THE ORDNUNG
SO ONE OF YOU IS GOING TO HAVE TO BREAK THE RULES AGAIN
THIS "DYZAN" THEY SPEAK OF MUST BE WHAT TENEBRION SENSED HERE
BEST WE LET STARKWEATHER CONFRONT DYZANSKI, THEN STRIKE WHEN BOTH ARE WEAK
REPORT TO TENEBRION I WILL BE KEEPING EYE ON STARKWEATHER
SO NOW YOU TRUST ME TO MIND MY MANNERS AROUND THAT PRETTY-BOY
WAIT
I AM NOT TRUSTING YOU AT ALL
YOU STAY I DELIVER GOOD NEWS--!

g-g-g-g-g-VROOOMMM
THAT'S IT NOW GIVE SOME GAS
Um, IT'S THE ONE TO THE RIGHT
FORGIVE ME, MISTER FERNANDEZ, BUT I'VE ONLY EVER DRIVEN A HORSE AND BUGGY BEFORE
WELL, THIS ISN'T ALL THAT DIFFERENT JUST PRETEND THERE'S A HORSE UNDER THE HOOD
VROOOOM
COUPLE HUNDRED OF 'EM, ACTUALLY!
Oh MY !
IF THAT DOESN'T WAKE THE DEAD

mmmmmmm-sput-sput-sput-kunk
g-g-g-g-g-KUNK
r-r-r-r-r-KUNK
WAS THAT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN?
I DON'T THINK SO
SOUNDS LIKE THE SOLENOID GIMME A SECOND
CAREFUL!
ah!
SORRY I JUST MEANT THAT--
I KNOW "EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED"

REEEENK
HYAHHH!
NO WAY
NOTHIN IN HERE BUT ONE SWEET V E GHT
O.I.'S FINE CONNECTIONS CHECK OUT CARB MIXTURE S SET WHERE IT SHOULD BE
NOTHING'S WRONG WITH THE CAR
LET'S COME UP WITH SOME DIFFERENT BAIT, CASSIE, 'CAUSE THIS AIN'T WORKING! MAYBE WE RE JUST BEING TOO OBVIOUS

GOOD LORD!
THUNK
WHUDD
NO!

NO.
HEY, DYZAN, YOU'RE DEAD! UNDERSTAND?!
TIME TO MOVE ON!
⇒nff⇐ NO
NO MORE HURTING THESE PEOPLE!
AND NO MORE DISGRACING YOUR OWN MEMORY!
REMEMBER! YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS A MONSTER!
REMEMBER THE MAN YOU ONCE WERE!
⇒gasp⇐

LIKE HELL YOU WILL

LISTEN, ANGEL-FOOD... YOU HAVE TO HIT THE ROAD RIGHT NOW!
THE BOSS OF PERDITION SENT A REALLY BAD ONE AFTER YOU. HE'LL BE HERE IN MINUTES, AND IF HE FINDS YOU, HE WON'T LEAVE ANY WITNESSES
WHO...?
THIS YOUNG LADY'S GOT A MISSION TO PERFORM, AND WE CAN'T HAVE YOU DISTRACTING HER
IT WASN'T EASY DITCHING THE COMMIE SO I COULD WARN YOU, BUT A WARNING'S THE BEST I CAN DO FOR YOU RIGHT NOW
I MAY BE ABLE TO HANDLE GHOSTS--EVEN A HUMDINGER-GHOST LIKE THIS GUY--BUT I'M NOT SQUAT COMPARED TO THE ADVERSARY'S MAIN MANHUNTER
WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
WHY SHOULD I EVEN BELIEVE YOU? WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
I'M NEW
WE'LL GET REACQUAINTED LATER. RIGHT NOW YOU NEED TO RUN.

AND I NEED TO GET THIS HERE PRIZE-WINNER INTO THE BOSS' "BUG JAR"
WAIT!
WHAT JUST HAPPENED, CASSIE?
I'M NOT SURE. I THINK MAYBE I HAVE A FRIEND ON THE OTHER SIDE...
WE HAVE TO GO NOW, CISCO, OR ELSE WE'LL BRING MORE TROUBLE DOWN ON THESE POOR PEOPLE
SO HE WARNED YOU ABOUT SOME NEW GOON THEY SET AFTER US?
YOU THINK IT COULD'VE BEEN YOUR GRANDFATHER'S GHOST IN DISGUISE?
I TOLD YOU I DON'T KNOW!
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ANYMORE

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# Greetings From... Cape Keel

Dear Mom & Dad,

Cisco and I are in Cape Keel, about half a day's drive from Marbleton. As it happens, we're passing through during the "Remembrance Day" festival, where they honor all the fishermen and sailors who've drowned here over the years. Sounds morbid, but it's really just one big street party!

Anyhow, I'm hoping this whole business with the monsters-disguised-as-people, and the soul-stealing, and all that junk will soon be over. I just know we'll find someone in the capital to help us out, if we have to ask every single member of Congress!

One thing that troubles me is a warning I got from one of the Dark Spirits, who said his boss, the Adversary, sent "a really bad one" after me and Cisco. Not exactly sure what that means, but it's safe to say we don't want to take on Hell's Big Bad Bounty Hunter without some help — which is exactly what we'll find in Marbleton, don't you worry!

Hang in there, Mom and Dad. All this craziness will soon be over! I miss you!

Love,
Cassie

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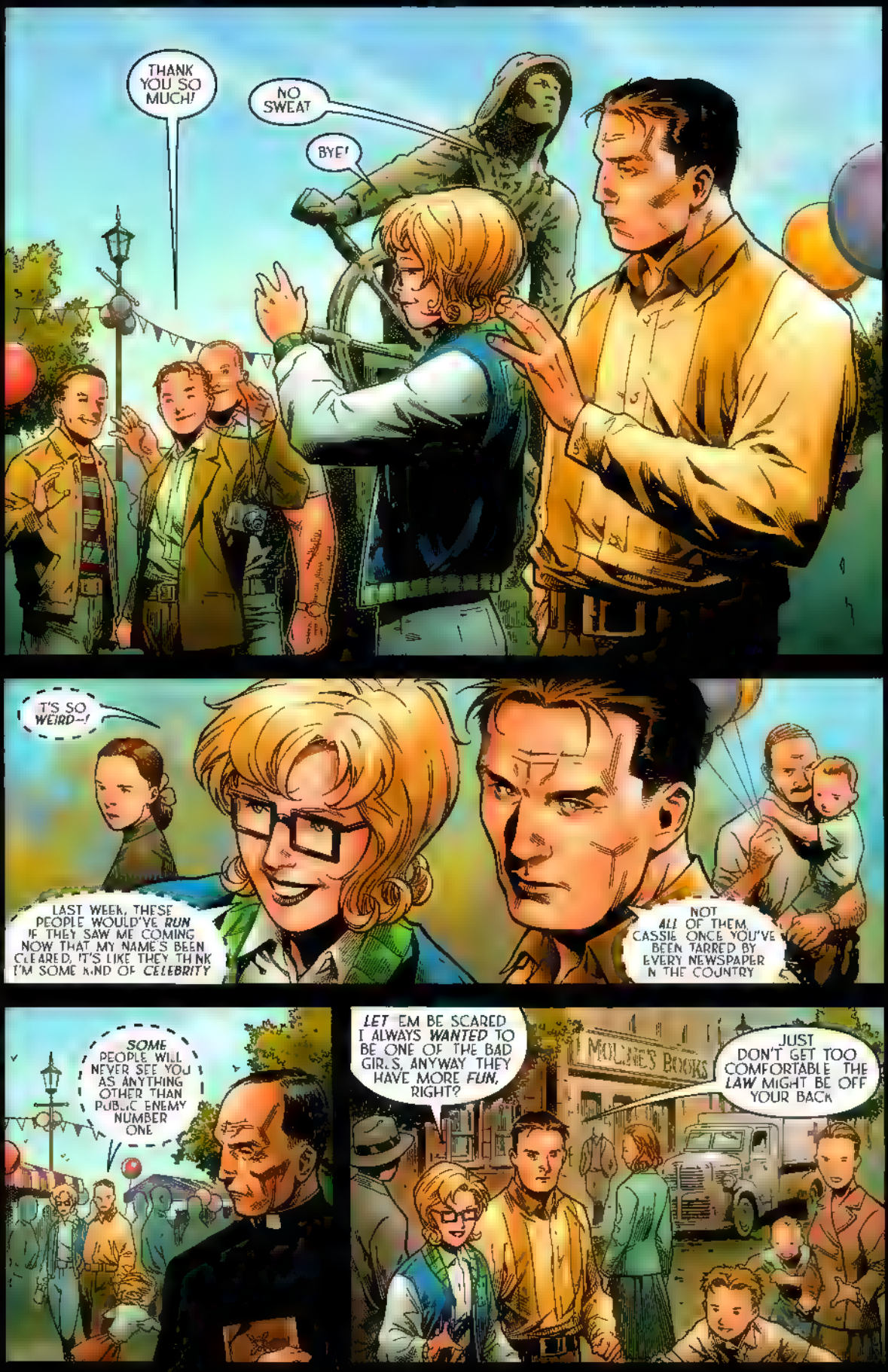
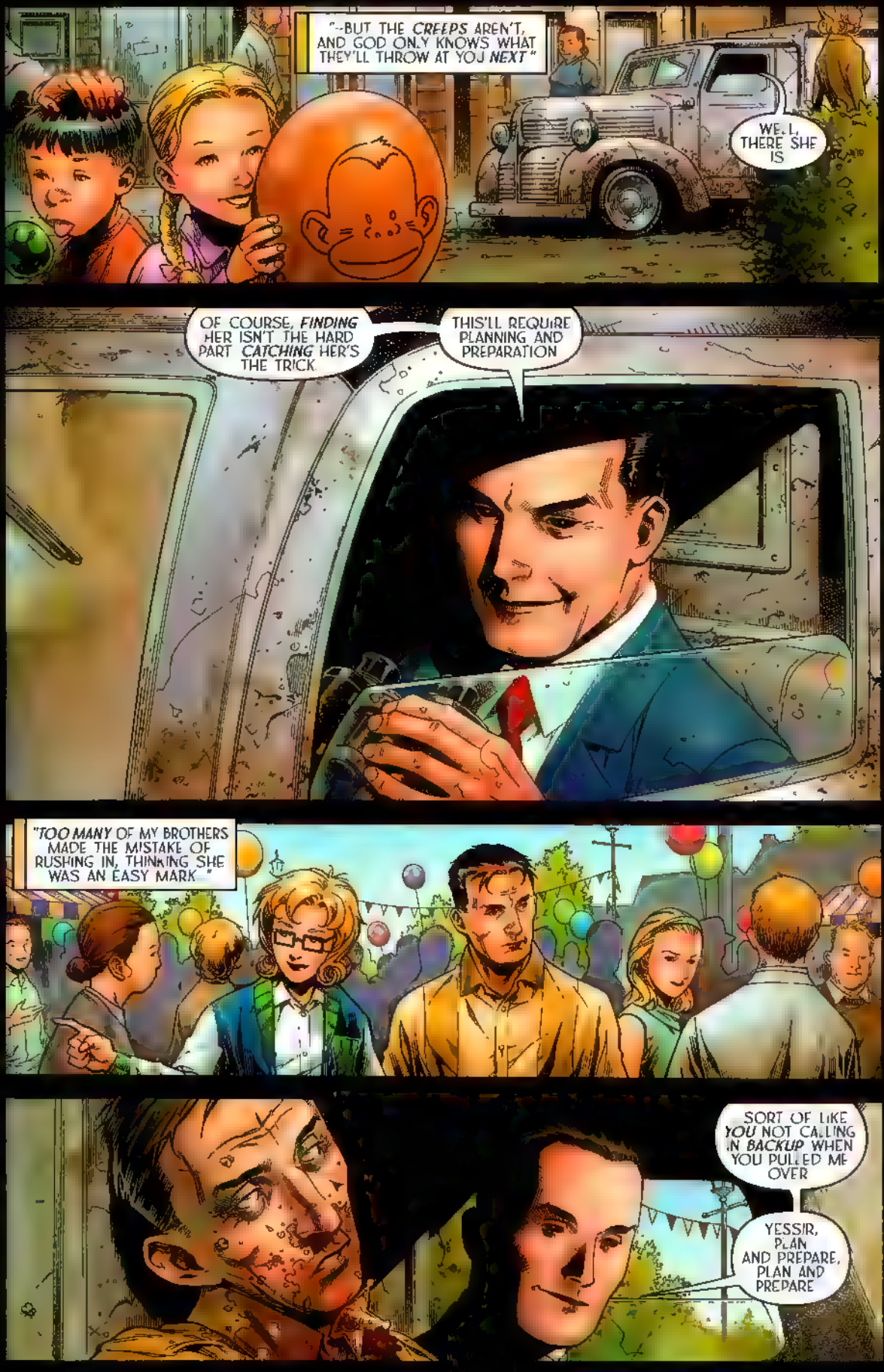
CHEESE!
EMBRANCE DAY


THANK YOU SO MUCH!
NO SWEAT
BYE!
IT'S SO WEIRD--!
LAST WEEK, THESE PEOPLE WOULD'VE RUN IF THEY SAW ME COMING NOW THAT MY NAME'S BEEN CLEARED, IT'S LIKE THEY THINK I'M SOME KIND OF CELEBRITY
NOT ALL OF THEM, CASSIE. ONCE YOU'VE BEEN TARRED BY EVERY NEWSPAPER IN THE COUNTRY
SOME PEOPLE WILL NEVER SEE YOU AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE
LET 'EM BE SCARED. I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE ONE OF THE BAD GIRLS, ANYWAY. THEY HAVE MORE FUN, RIGHT?
MOLLIE'S BOOKS
JUST DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE. THE LAW MIGHT BE OFF YOUR BACK


"--BUT THE *CREEPS* AREN'T, AND GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL THROW AT YOU *NEXT*"
WE, I, THERE SHE IS
OF COURSE, *FINDING* HER ISN'T THE HARD PART *CATCHING* HER'S THE TRICK
THIS'LL REQUIRE PLANNING AND PREPARATION
"*TOO MANY* OF MY BROTHERS MADE THE MISTAKE OF RUSHING IN, THINKING SHE WAS AN EASY MARK."
SORT OF LIKE *YOU* NOT CALLING IN *BACKUP* WHEN YOU PULLED ME OVER
YESSIR, PLAN AND PREPARE, PLAN AND PREPARE

" AND NEVER, NEVER UNDEREST MATE YOUR PREY"
IT'S A DAMNED DISGRACE, IS WHAT IT IS
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
THAT THEY WENT AHEAD WITH REMEMBRANCE DAY, AND THOSE POOR SOULS WHO WENT DOWN IN THE FERRY NOT TEN DAYS DEAD!
SORRY, I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH WHAT EXACTLY IS REMEMBRANCE DAY?
STARTED AS A PROPER MEMORIAL TO ALL THE FOLKS GOT THEMSELVES DROWNED HAPPENS A LOT IN A FISHING TOWN
NOWADAYS, IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE FOR A PARTY
'CEPT THIS YEAR THE FERRYBOAT SANK IN THE HARBOR--TOOK ABOUT A HUNDRED OF YOU TOURISTS WITH IT
HECK, THEY AIN'T EVEN RECOVERED ALL THE BODIES YET!
ANY DECENT FOLK STILL LEFT IN CAPE KEEL ARE AT THE CHURCH RIGHT NOW GOD RESTIN' THEIR SOULS
YOU'D THINK THE CITY COUNCIL WOULDA PAID 'EM PROPER RESPECTS, TOO, BUT THE MONEY GRUBBERS FIGURED CANCELING THE FESTIVAL WOULD ONLY COST FOLKS JOBS, AND--

THANK YOU, THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH
SNAP
=goomph=
YOU'RE RIGHT, MY FRIEND IT IS A DISGRACE THAT YOUR TOWNSMEN SIT IN THEIR BARS, LIVING IT UP...
...=hkk=...
WHILE A STONE'S THROW AWAY BLOATED CORPSES ROT BENEATH THESE WATERS
PERHAPS IT'S TIME THEY WERE MADE TO FACE THEIR SHAME

STOP LOOKING AT ME LIKE I'M SOME KIND OF CRIMINAL!
I AM OLD ENOUGH TO DRINK THIS, Y'KNOW
BARELY I KEEP THINKING YOUR FOLKS WOULDN'T LIKE ME BRINGING YOU IN HERE
LOOSEN UP, CISCO WE'LL BE IN MARBLETON BY TOMORROW, AND--
SOMEBODY CALL THE SHERIFF! WE GOT A GENUINE WANTED WOMAN IN HERE TONIGHT!
THAT'S ME
Y'THINK A FAMOUS OUTLAW LIKE YOU MIGHT HONOR ONE OF US SMALLTIME HELL RAISERS WITH A DANCE?
THAT IS, IF YOUR DAD DON'T MIND
HE'S NOT MY DAD

Uh oh. AREN'T YOU A BIT LONG IN THE TOOTH TO BE REELING IN A CATCH LIKE HER?
WE'RE JUST FRIENDS, AND YOU GOT SOME NERVE TO TALK ABOUT MY TEETH
Cisco--!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MISS. YOUR FRIEND IS LOOKIN' OUT FOR YOU ! RESPECT THAT
BESIDES, I DIDN'T WANT THAT DANCE FOR ME, ANYWAY
YOU DIDN'T?
LEMME INTRODUCE MY JUNIOR DECKHAND, JONESY
HE CAN'T BAIT A LONGLINE OR SET A LOBSTER POT WORTH A CRUD, BUT HE'S A DARN SIGHT PRETTIER THAN THE REST OF US PUT TOGETHER!
I'LL SAY HE IS
HI
unhé !
CASSIE?!
YOU OKAY, MISS ?
SOMETHING'S WRONG SOMEONE

SOMEONE'S HERE
" SOMEONE BAD "
WE HAVE TO GO RIGHT NOW, CISCO! THIS ONE'S VERY STRONG. I CAN FEEL HIM!
HEY, IF IT WAS SOMETHING WE SAID
WE GOTTA GO WHEN WE DO, SOMEONE'S GONNA TRY TO FOLLOW US. MUCH OBLIGED IF YOU AND YOUR CREW CAN SLOW HIM DOWN
Um SURE ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS GUY?
WE JUST NEED A HEAD START, BUT DON'T FIGHT HIM, OKAY? YOU GOTTA PROMISE ME THAT!
AYE, AYE

I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK WAS HE THE TOWN *DOCTOR* OR SOMETHING?
I DON'T *THINK* SO
Aw no
I *KNEW* WE SHOULDA PUT UP THE TOP AND LOCKED THE DOORS -!
I THOUGHT EVERYBODY WAS AT CHURCH
*HEY!* THAT'S MY *CAR!*
YOU GET OUT OF THERE *RIGHT NOW,* OR YOU ARE ONE DEAD--
DUCK !

HOLD UP JUST A SECOND, PARTNER
DIDN'T NOBODY EVER TEACH YOU NOT TO BOTHER NICE YOUNG LADIES?
SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'RE ABOUT TO
REAR EXIT'S FOR THE TRASH
KRASH
oof
BEEN A WHILE SINCE I HAD ME A GOOD RUMBLE
THEN YOU'RE IN FOR A TREAT

WHEN I SAY "NOW" TURN AND RUN
WE WON'T GET FAR WITHOUT THE CAR
SERVES US RIGHT FOR STEALING IT
NOW!
¡CARAY!
BLAM!

MOVE IT, CASSIE!
WHERE?
JUST RUN!
GOD, I HOPE THOSE GUYS IN THE BAR DIDN'T TRY TO BE HEROES
JONESY, GET AWAY FROM IT.
GYAHHH!
WHO THE HELL'S LAUGHIN'?!
TRUST ME. CISCO
" YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW!"

THOSE THINGS.
THEY WERE SOLID AND I COULD SEE THEM
ARE THEY GHOSTS? LIKE THAT DYZAN SPOOK ?
NO
THEY WERE LIKE THE OPPOSITE OF GHOSTS
COULDN'T SENSE ANYTHING IN THEM...
NO SOULS
HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE THERE?!
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
BEATS ME
I THINK THIS WAY LEADS OUT OF TOWN
DEAD END!

"DEAD END"
NOW THAT'S FUNNY
BYLETH DIDN'T MENTION YOUR WIT
NOT THAT SHE'D RECOGNIZE A JOKE IF IT JUMPED UP AND CLAWED HER EYES OUT
BYLETH
THE GOON-SQUAD AT MY HOUSE THEIR LEADER'S NAME WAS BYLETH
CASSIE STARKWEATHER, I PRESUME? MY NAME'S TANNER
I'VE SORT OF BEEN FORCED OUT OF RETIREMENT TO FETCH YOU BACK TO PERDITION IT SEEMS MY EX-BOSS IS INTERESTED IN YOU
MY NEW ASSISTANTS HAVE CUT OFF ALL THE STREETS OUT OF TOWN THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN
YOU WANNA PLAY THIS OUT AND GET HURT? OR SHALL WE JUST SKIP THIS STUPIDITY AND GO MEET THE BIG MAN RIGHT NOW?
COME QUIETLY AND I PROMISE I'LL SPARE YOUR BOYFRIEND, THE SHERIFF

WHY DOES EVERYONE ASSUME ?
THOSE SCREAMS
WHAT DID YOU DO TO THOSE FISHERMEN BACK AT THE BAR?
WELL
I WAS GOING TO SPARE YOU THE GORY DETAILS
BUT SINCE YOU HAD TO ASK
KLINK

DON'T LOOK BACK DON'T LOOK BACK
shuff shuff
MAYBE IF WE FIND THE CHURCH WE CAN
Aw, no...
THEY'RE HERDING US TOWARD THE WATER
THIS TANNER GUY DID HIS HOMEWORK
shuff shuff... MAYBE
MAYBE WE CAN STEAL A BOAT
THESE PEOPLE shuff... LOCK 'EM UP TIGHT
shh --! Y'HEAR SOMETHING ?
mm..

..nnNNnnnNNN..
shuff
HOW MANY...?
gahh
CASSIE--!
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT...?

WHO SAID THAT?
SAID WHAT?
CASSIE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WE'VE GOTTA MOVE--!
THIS MAN'S GHOST IS HERE, CISCO I THINK HE'S TRYING TO HELP
klink!
THANKS!

♫ Oh, CASSIEEE ♫
YOU REALLY BLEW IT, YOU KNOW
YOU COULD'VE SAVED SHERIFF FERNANDEZ A VERY PAINFUL END IF YOU'D ONLY TAKEN MY OFFER
NOW YOU'LL ARRIVE IN PERDITION WEARING HIS GUTS FOR A NECKLACE

I CAN FEEL HIM GETTING CLOSER, CISCO--!
I KNOW I KNOW
WHRRRRRRRRRRRRR
YES!
CISCO'S GUTS WORK JUST FINE WHERE THEY ARE!
WHRRRRRRRRRRRRR
THIS CAN'T BE! I HAD EVERY ESCAPE ROUTE CUT OFF.!

BEGONE!
THERE'S NOTHING MORE *TEDIOUS* THAN A SMART-MOUTH GHOST
I'M RUSTIER THAN I THOUGHT I OVERLOOKED THAT LITTLE DETAIL
*NOW* WHAT DO I DO WITH ALL THIS WALKING *FISH-FOOD*..?
SO, GO IN PEACE, TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD
*CONFIDENT* THAT YOU REMAIN IN HIS TENDER CARE
AND *COMFORTED* THAT THOSE WE *LOST* IN LAST WEEK'S TRAGEDY--
--NOW SIT AT *HIS* TABLE AND BASK IN *HIS* GLORY

WAITING IN JOYFUL HOPE
FOR THAT GLORIOUS DAY--
--WHEN WE ARE REUNITED WITH OUR HONORED DEAD

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# Route 666™

Tony Bedard
Karl Moline
Rick Magyar
Wil Quintana

AOL Keyword™: CROSSGEN

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# Greetings From... MARBLETON
## OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

DEAR MOM & DAD,

CISCO AND I ARE GOING STRAIGHT TO THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION SO AGENT MELCHIOR CAN INTRODUCE US TO SOME GOVERNMENT BIG-WIGS. I'VE GOTTEN PRETTY GOOD AT SHARING MY "SECOND SIGHT," SO I CAN MAKE THEM SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT THE COUNTRY'S INFESTED WITH MONSTERS DISGUISED AS PEOPLE. WHAT THE POLITICIANS ACTUALLY DO ABOUT IT IS UP TO THEM.

GOTTA DO THIS ASAP, SINCE A REALLY BAD MONSTER-MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF TANNER IS ON OUR TRAIL. TRY NOT TO WORRY, THOUGH. SOON AS WE'VE WARNED THE RIGHT PEOPLE, I'M COMING HOME.

LOVE,
CASSIE

Tom BEDARD
Writer

Karl MOLINE
Penciler

Rick MAGYAR
Inker

Wil QUINTANA
Colorist

Troy PETERI
Letterer

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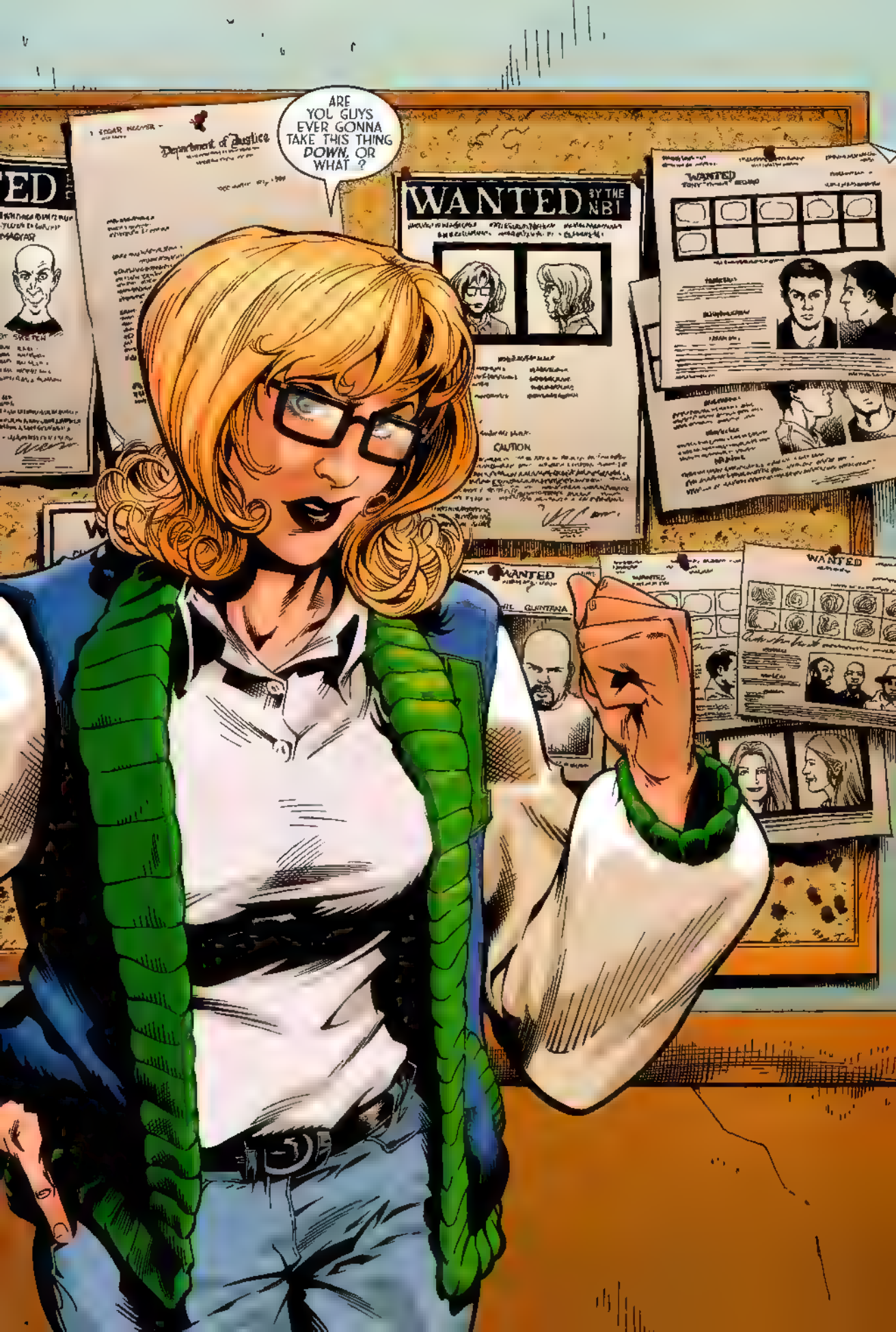

ARE YOU GUYS EVER GONNA TAKE THIS THING DOWN, OR WHAT ?
Department of Justice
WANTED BY THE NBI
CAUTION
WANTED

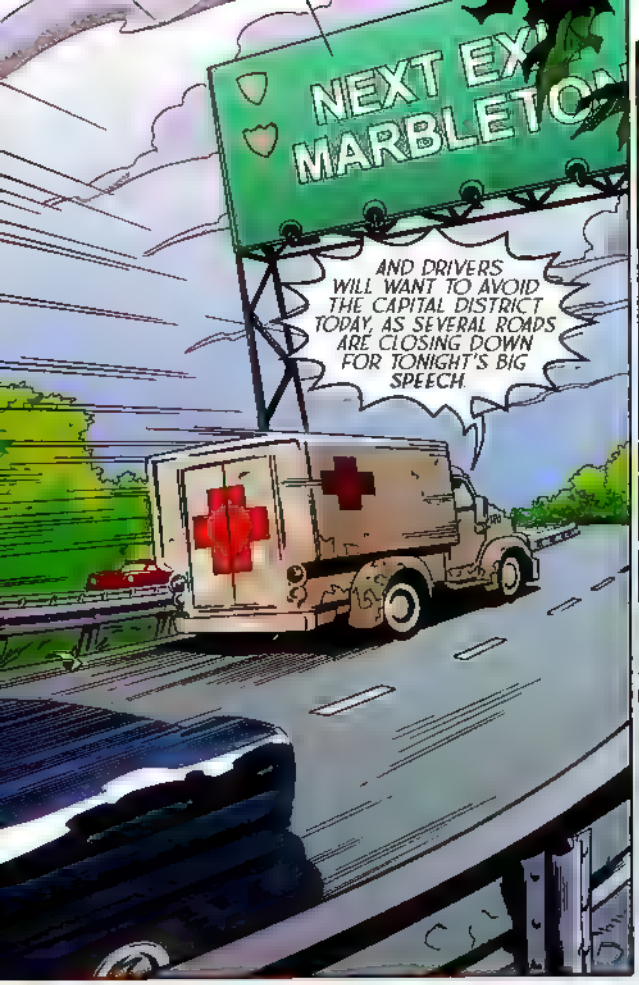
I MEAN, THE CHARGES WERE *DROPPED*— YOU'VE GOTTA *KNOW* THAT, RIGHT?
er. THAT'S NOT REALLY MY ah
CUT HER SOME *SLACK*, CASSIE.
WE'LL TAKE IT UP WITH AGENT MELCHIOR *IF* HE EVER GETS HIS SKINNY BUTT OUT HERE
WHY ARE YOU TWO *HERE*? AND *TODAY*, OF ALL DAYS--!
I *TOLD* YOU WE WERE COMING DIDN'T YOU GET MY *LETTER* ?
YES WELL YOU *COULD'VE* CALLED TO SAY IT WAS *TODAY*
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT TODAY?
I'D RATHER DISCUSS IT IN MY *OFFICE*
SHRIIP
HEY, THAT'S *FEDERAL PROPERTY!*

SO WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TODAY?
DON'T YOU READ THE PAPERS? *BORODIN'S* COMING TO MEET DIRECTOR PURVIS!
WHO'S BORODIN?
*AMBASSADOR* BORODIN FROM *RODINA* ?
COULD YOU *PLEASE* GET OFF OF THERE?
THE *REDS* JUST REPLACED THEIR AMBASSADOR WITH THIS BORODIN GUY, SO HE'S MAKING THE ROUNDS, MEETING ALL OUR TOP PEOPLE
AND YOU'RE JUST *LETTING* THIS COMMIE SIGHT-SEE IN N.B.I HEADQUARTERS?
HE WON'T SEE ANYTHING CLASSIFIED BUT EVERYONE'S ON EDGE TODAY, SO COULD YOU *PLEASE* COME BACK ON MONDAY?

NEGATIVE WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME
WHEN WE STOPPED IN CAPE KEEL, WE NEARLY GOT CAUGHT BY SOME NEW DEMON GUY THAT'S HUNTING US
IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME TILL HE CATCHES UP, SO WE NEED YOUR HELP, PRONTO
MY HELP ?
JUST PUT US IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE IN THE GOVERNMENT OR MILITARY WHO WILL LISTEN
IF CASSIE CAN MAKE SOMEONE SEE ONE OF THESE CREATURES, THE WAY SHE MADE US SEE 'EM, THEN MAYBE WE CAN ORGANIZE A DECENT COUNTERATTACK
I I DON'T KNOW
BELIEVE ME, I'D MUCH RATHER ASK SOMEONE ELSE, BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WE KNOW IN MARBLETON, SO IT'S GOTTA BE YOU
SO I'M JUST SUPPOSED TO MARCH YOU INTO PRESIDENT CARLSON'S OFFICE AND LET HER MIND-ZAP HIM, OR SOMETHING ?
I DIDN'T ASK FOR THE PRESIDENT JUST SOMEONE WHO CAN ACTUALLY MOBILIZE COPS, AGENTS, TROOPS WHATEVER--!
sigh
OKAY. BUT IT'S GONNA HAVE TO WAIT AT LEAST AN HOUR OR TWO
HE'S HERE

"YOU TWO JUST WAIT HERE IN MY OFFICE, AND DON'T LET *ANYONE* SEE YOU, OKAY?
"ONCE THIS *STATE VISIT* THING'S OVER, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE I KNOW AT THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL SECURITY
" THEY HUNT COMMUNIST INFILTRATORS LIVING HERE IN EMPYREAN. THEY'RE NOT WELL-KNOWN, SINCE MOST OF THEIR OPS ARE *BLACK BAG* JOBS
BUT THAT'S ALSO *GOOD* FOR YOU, SINCE THEY CAN MOUNT A QUIET HUNT FOR YOUR MONSTER PEOPLE WITHOUT
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
THE *AMBASSADOR*

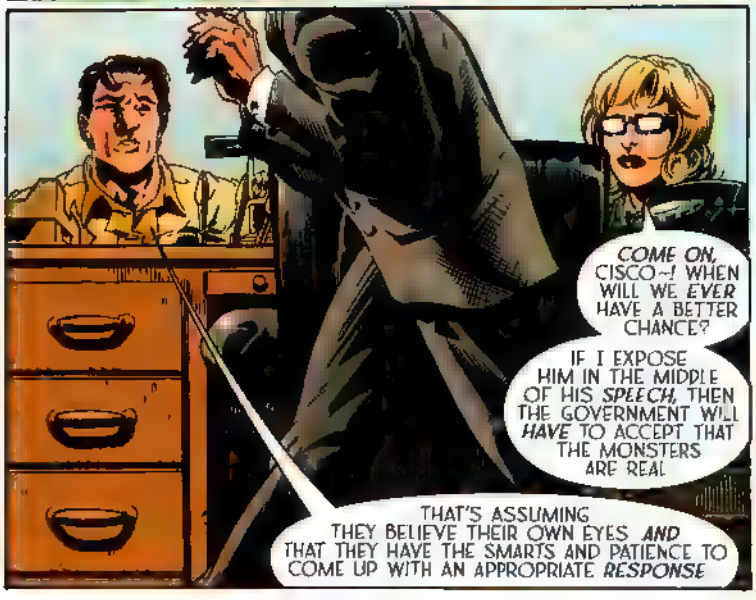
" HE'S ONE OF THEM."
BUT AREN'T THEY ALWAYS DOCTORS AND SUCH ?
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO
YES.


NEXT EX
MARBLETO
AND DRIVERS WILL WANT TO AVOID THE CAPITAL DISTRICT TODAY, AS SEVERAL ROADS ARE CLOSING DOWN FOR TONIGHT'S BIG SPEECH.

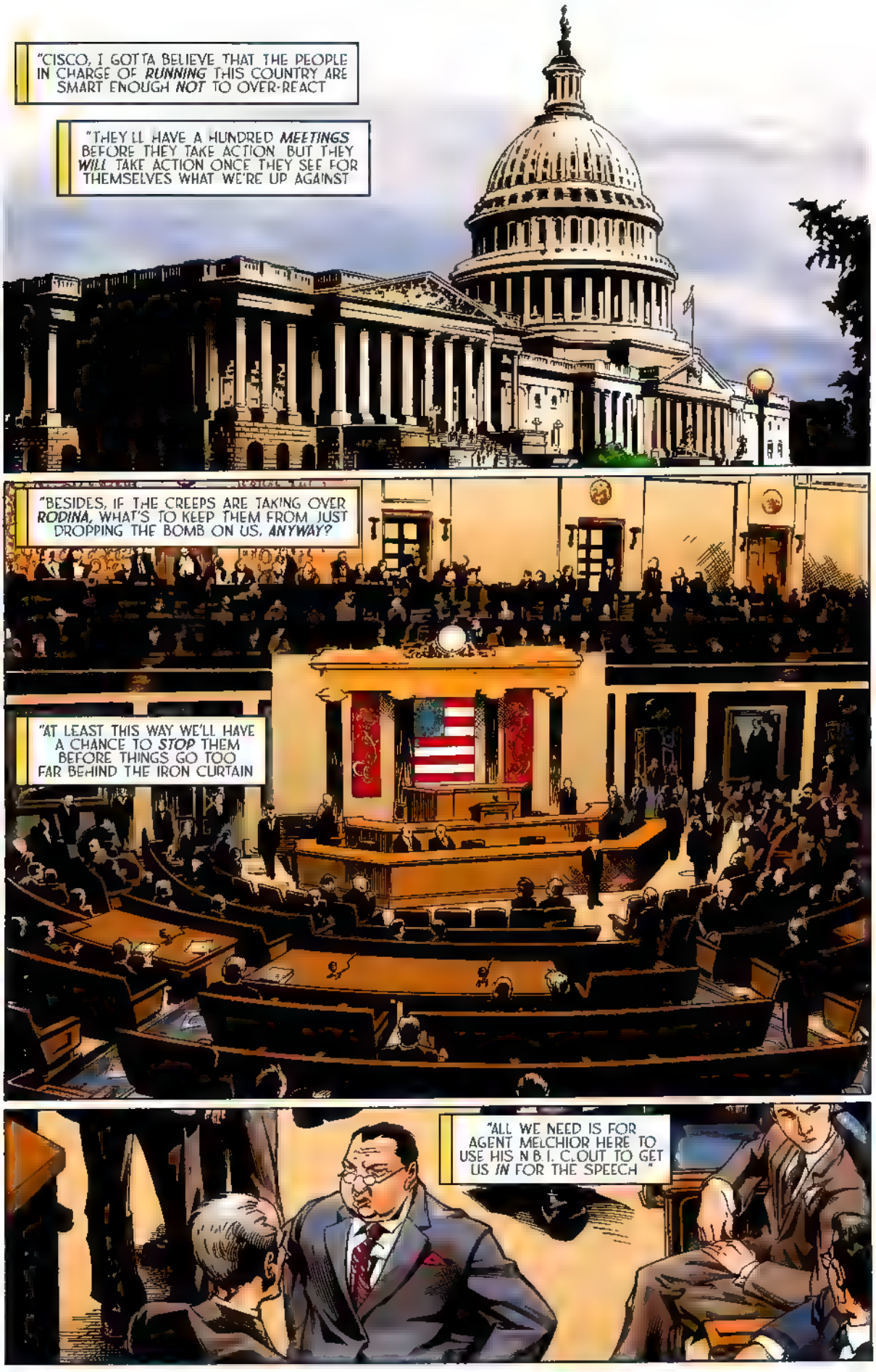
THIS WILL MARK THE FIRST TIME A RODINAN OFFICIAL HAS ADDRESSED CONGRESS SINCE THE RECENT SHAKEUPS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF RODINAN PREMIERE ANDREI POPOV.
Aw, NO NOT TODAY

IF THOSE NORTHERN BLOC IDIOTS TRY TO SNATCH THIS GIRL AWAY FROM ME, THERE *WILL* BE HELL TO PAY

"CASSIE, ARE YOU *SURE* THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?"
NBI


*COME ON*, CISCO--! WHEN WILL WE *EVER* HAVE A BETTER CHANCE?
IF I EXPOSE HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS *SPEECH*, THEN THE GOVERNMENT WILL *HAVE* TO ACCEPT THAT THE MONSTERS ARE REAL
THAT'S ASSUMING THEY BELIEVE THEIR OWN EYES *AND* THAT THEY HAVE THE SMARTS AND PATIENCE TO COME UP WITH AN APPROPRIATE *RESPONSE*

Y'KNOW, FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS WE'VE ALL LIVED WITH THE THREAT OF *THE BOMB*
IF YOU SCARE THE *WITS* OUT OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THEIR FINGER ON THE *BUTTON*


"CISCO, I GOTTA BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF *RUNNING* THIS COUNTRY ARE SMART ENOUGH *NOT* TO OVER-REACT
"THEY'LL HAVE A HUNDRED *MEETINGS* BEFORE THEY TAKE ACTION BUT THEY *WILL* TAKE ACTION ONCE THEY SEE FOR THEMSELVES WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST
"BESIDES, IF THE CREEPS ARE TAKING OVER *RODINA*, WHAT'S TO KEEP THEM FROM JUST DROPPING THE BOMB ON US, *ANYWAY*?
"AT LEAST THIS WAY WE'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO *STOP* THEM BEFORE THINGS GO TOO FAR BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN
"ALL WE NEED IS FOR AGENT MELCHIOR HERE TO USE HIS N.B.I. CLOUT TO GET US *IN* FOR THE SPEECH"

ah GOD HATE CROWDS
HANG IN THERE, GUNNAR
AGENT MELCHIOR, N B I
I NEED TO GET THESE TWO PEOPLE INTO THE MAIN AUDITORIUM IT'S A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY
NOBODY SAID NOTHIN' TO ME
I JUST DID! LOOK, I DON'T HAVE TIME TO ARGUE, JUST OPEN THE DOOR AND LET US THROUGH
Uh uh. YOU GOTTA TAKE THIS UP WITH THE CHIEF OF SECURITY
DO YOU WANT TO TAKE THIS UP WITH MY BOSS, J ELGAR PURVIS?
HE COMES HERE, I'LL OPEN THE DOOR OTHERWISE THE CHIEF'S OFFICE IS DOWN THE HALL
WE HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER ENTRANCE
Y'KNOW, MAYBE I DON'T HAVE TO ACTUALLY BE INSIDE THE AUDITORIUM
AS LONG AS I'M NEARBY, MAYBE IN AN ADJOINING ROOM, I SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO SEND OUT MY "SECOND SIGHT" TO THOSE CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS
HOW ABOUT A BROOM CLOSET?
THERE'S ONE DOWN HERE. PRETTY SURE I CAN JIMMY THE LOCK

<ENTRANCE IS SECURE BRING IN COMRADE BORODIN>
THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD
eh?
♫
!
<I JUST SAW TENEBRION IN THE CROWD.>
<FIND OUT WHAT HE IS DOING HERE>
<AT ONCE, COMRADE BORODIN!>

GOT IT
KLIK
MOVE -!
♪
PRETTY SURE THE AUDITORIUM'S JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS WALL
ALL RIGHT, CASSIE DO YOUR THING
NO. THE SPEECH HASN'T STARTED YET
WE SHOULD BE SAFE IN HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, RIGHT, AGENT MELCHIOR?

WHAT YOU ARE *DOING* HERE, TENEBRION? YOU NO LONGER SERVE PERDITION
ACTUALLY, I'M *BACK* FOR ONE LAST HUNT DIDN'T YOU GET THE MEMO?
YOU ARE ON HUNT? HERE? *TONIGHT?* IS PLENTY BIG *COINCIDENCE,* NYET?
CHECK WITH YOUR *BOSSES* BACK IN THE MOTHERLAND THE ADVERSARY TASKED ME TO RETRIEVE THE *STARKWEATHER* GIRL
WHATEVER RIVALRY YOU NORTHERN BLOC BOYS HAVE WITH BYLETH'S CREW HERE IN THE STATES, IT'S NONE OF MY CONCERN JUST STAY OUT OF MY WAY
PLEASE DO NOT BE COMING CLOSER
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THING'S *NO GOOD* AGAINST ME?
*HOLD IT* RIGHT THERE!
*YOU!* DROP THE *GUN!*
IS *OKAY,* OFFICER I AM WITH RODINAN DELEGATION YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH *DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY* ?
SAVE THE *LEGALESE* FOR MY CAPTAIN I AM *NOT* LETTING YOU SHOOT A MAN IN THE CAPITAL BUILDING
NOW, *BOTH* OF YOU COME NICE AND QUIET TO THE SECURITY POST
IT *WOULD* BE MORE DISCREET THERE

THESE COLLEGE KIDS AND THEIR CRAZY FADS--!
POLICE POST
CAPITOL POLICE
CAPITOL POLICE
THE HULA HOOPS THE SKATEBOARDS THE PET ROCKS, AND NOW THIS
SAYS HERE, TWENTY-ONE FRAT BOYS AT SACKVILLE COLLEGE JAMMED THEMSELVES INTO ONE PHONEBOOTH TO BREAK A WORLD RECORD
I'M GUESSIN' IT'S THE RECORD FOR DOIN' USELESS CRAP
SOMEBODY OPEN A CAGE!
ROLLINS?! WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
CAUGHT THEM IN THE SOUTH HALL. THE RODINAN GUY WAS POINTING A GUN AT--
THE RODINAN GUY IS WITH THE AMBASSADOR, DIMWIT!
YOU TRYIN' TO START AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT HERE?

SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN, PLEASE WELCOME THE AMBASSADOR FROM RODINA, VASILY BORODIN
YOU *MEET* THE NEW PINKO YET?
THIS MORNING DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT HE MADE MY *SKIN* CRAWL
CITIZENS OF UNITED STATES OF EMPYREAN, I BID YOU *GREETINGS* ON BEHALF OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF RODINA
RECENT *CHANGES* IN GOVERNMENT AND POLICIES OF RODINA ARE RESULTING IN MY BEING POSTED HERE
I AM BEING AWARE OF MUCH *WORRY* AMONG YOU OVER SUCH CHANGES
NOBODY LIKE SURPRISES ESPECIALLY WHEN OUR GREAT NATIONS HAVE SO MANY *MISSILES* POINTED AT EACH OTHER

SO TONIGHT I REASSURE YOU ALL THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPYREAN AND RODINA REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED
OKAY, I GUESS IT'S SHOWTIME
BREAK A LEG, KID
shhh..
gasp
PREMIER POPOV IS PLEDGING CONTINUED SUPPORT TO THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF BANAWI

THIS WAS ALL A *MISUNDERSTANDING*, RIGHT? DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M *SAYIN'*?
DA IS MISTAKE
THIS OTHER FELLA WITH YOU?
..
DA, MAY HE RETURN WITH ME TO AUDITORIUM?
SURE. I'LL COME *WITH* YOU, JUST TO MAKE SURE THIS IS SQUARED WITH YOUR *BOSS*
*SORRY* ABOUT OFFICER ROLLINS. YOU KNOW HOW *ROOKIES* GET ALWAYS JUMPIN' AT THEIR OWN SHADOW--
--ah
Oh, MISS STARKWEATHER WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* ?

AND WHILE SITUATION IN BANAWI IS *TENSE*, CONTINUED DIALOGUE IN GOOD FAITH WILL
WILL
?
WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID ?
SWEET LORD ABOVE--!
<WE ARE EXPOSED, COMRADE BORODIN! SOMEHOW THEY SEE US!>
krish
krish
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
<KILL THE LIGHTS! WE HAVE TO GET BORODIN OUT OF HERE NOW!>
krish

SNAP!
TAKE THEM, TENEBRION! I COVER YOUR BACK!
AIEEEEEE!
BLAM BLAM
SLSSSH
HEY, "COMRADE," HELP ME CLEAN UP THIS MESS
COMRADE...?
WHAT IN THE
Heh

THESE MORTALS AND THEIR CRAZY FADS--!

YAHHH!
EEEEEEE
OOF
GAH
<COMRADES!>
<THE STARKWEATHER GIRL IS HERE! SHE MUST BE BEHIND WHAT JUST HAPPENED!>
<STARKWEATHER?! WHERE IS SHE?>
<I FOUND TENEBRION LOOKING FOR HER IN A SECTION BEHIND THE AUDITORIUM >
<SHOW ME! IF ANYTHING OF VALUE CAN BE SALVAGED FROM THIS DEBACLE, THEN WE MUST TRY!>
<WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY IF WE'RE TO FIND HER BEFORE TENEBRION! ALL OF US PUT TOGETHER CAN'T STAND AGAINST HIM!>

DID YOU HEAR THAT *GUNFIRE?!* WHAT HAVE YOU DONE CASSIE?
OPENED THEIR EYES
ONCE THINGS CALM DOWN A LITTLE YOU CAN *INTRODUCE* ME TO SOME OF THOSE OLD CODGERS, AND I CAN *EXPLAIN* WHAT THEY SAW
DON'T WORRY-- I'LL LET THEM KNOW THIS WAS ALL *MY* IDEA
*FORGET IT!* I NEVER SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN YOU *THIS* FAR--!
YOU TWO ARE *ON YOUR OWN!*
*DOBRY VECHER* CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER IS TO BE COMING WITH *US*.
WE HAVE *FLIGHT* TO BE CATCHING SO PLEASE FORGIVE *RUDENESS*.
...
*MOVE!*

..shkk..
wheeze.
<SEDATE THE GIRL AND GET HER TO THE CAR--QUICKLY!>
<WE KILL HER COMPANION, YES?>
NYET! <IF SHE CARES FOR HIM, HE'LL PROVIDE LEVERAGE DURING HER INTERROGATION>
<KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP US. AND IF MY PLANE IS NOT FUELED UP WHEN WE REACH THE AIRPORT, KILL THE GROUND CREW, TOO!>
..skakk..
..whuhhh.
YOU WERE WITH CASSIE STARKWEATHER HER SCENT IS UPON YOU WHERE DID SHE GO?
M-MONSTERS shkk.. RODINIAN MONSTERS
I WARNED THAT BORSCHT-EATING BUFFOON NOT TO MESS WITH MY PREY
NOW I'LL HAVE TO REMIND HIS NEKULTURNY MASTERS WHY THEY SHOULD NEVER CROSS ME

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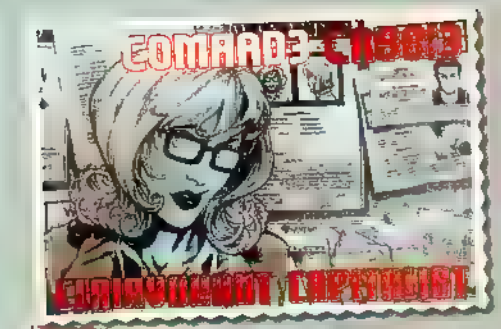
BEDARD MOLINE MAGYAR QUINTANA



# Greetings From...
# PEOPLE'S REPUBLIK OF RODINA

To: Colonel Dragunov, Director Adskij Munitions Combine
From: Ambassador Borodin
Re: Cassandra Starkweather
Date: February 4

We have captured Cassandra Starkweather and her companion, Francisco Fernandez. Both were transported from Empyrean to Rodina, and currently await interrogation within Cheka Headquarters in Serdtsevina.

The girl was wanted by our dread lord, the Adversary, to determine why she can see past the human guise of Perdition operatives like ourselves. In time, she could have exposed our infiltration in human society, along with our global soul-harvesting operation. My Chief Interrogator shall assess the true extent of Starkweather's psychic abilities. I will keep you apprised of progress.

Yours in the Brimstone Bond,

BORODIN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LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA BE A LONG DAY FOR BOTH OF US, YOU BLOODSUCKER!
I WAS IN THE WAR I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR COMMIE INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES, AND I'VE BEEN TRAINED TO RESIST 'EM!
SO YOU ARE KNOWING "ALL ABOUT" MY FIELD OF EXPERTISE? PLEASE, SHARE SUCH WISDOM ENLIGHTEN ME
AND IF I FALL FOR THAT LINE OF MALARKEY, ONCE I CRACK EVEN A LITTLE, THE FLOODGATES JUST OPEN FROM THERE
WELL FIRST, YOU'RE GONNA TRY TO BREAK ME DOWN
YOU'LL JUST WORK ON ME TILL YOU THINK I'VE LOST ALL HOPE, AND THEN YOU SAY THAT MAYBE I CAN HELP MYSELF OUTTA THIS
IT'LL BE SOMETHIN' LIKE "I WANNA STOP HURTING YOU, BUT MY BOSS EXPECTS RESULTS IF YOU COULD JUST GIVE ME SOME SMALL, INSIGNIFICANT BIT OF INFO, MAYBE I COULD LET UP ON YOU."
AND WHEN IT'S OVER, YOU PUT A BULLET IN MY BRAINPAN AND MOVE ON TO YOUR NEXT CLIENT
AHEM THAT IS STANDARD PROCEDURE BUT SINCE YOU ARE EXPERT, PERHAPS WE SKIP DIRECTLY TO HOW YOU SAY? "GOOD COP" ?
CIGARETTE?

GET STUFFED
YOU *WOUND* ME, COMRADE FERNANDEZ
WE BRING YOU AND STARKWEATHER GIRL WHOLE WAY FROM EMPYREAN, AT GREAT *EXPENSE* TO PEOPLE OF RODINA, AND YOU *REFUSE* HOSPITALITY
PERHAPS YOU FIND MOTHERLAND TOBACCO *INFERIOR* TO HOME BRAND? I DO NOT KNOW.
ONLY THING OF WHICH I AM *CERTAIN* IS YOU *WILL* TALK
YOU ARE *MINE* NOW. YOU SEE NO AMOUNT OF TRAINING OR RESISTANCE CAN CHANGE THIS FACT
YOU WILL TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER AND HER UNIQUE *ABILITIES*
BUT, FIRST, YOU WILL ENJOY *CIGARETTE* I SUGGEST YOU INHALE *DEEPLY*, BECAUSE IT WILL BE YOUR *LAST*
N THROUGH NOSE
OUT THROUGH MOUTH
IN THROUGH *NOSE*
SNIFF
sukk

EEEYAAAAAAHHH!
Oh, MY GOD--!
WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO CISCO UP THERE?
DEPENDS COULD BE MANY THINGS-- NONE OF THEM GOOD
IS TRUE, LITTLE GIRL IN SPETSNAZ, WE LEARN MULTIPLE WAYS TO BE MAKING MEN TALK
SPETS NATS ?

IF HE IS LUCKY, THEY MERELY LAY HIM FACE DOWN ON FLOOR
THEN HIS LEGS ARE BENT BACK TO BRING HEELS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO BACK OF NECK
THIS PRODUCES ANSWERS IN SECONDS
NOT SO LUCKY, AND THEY GIVE HIM "FLYING CARPET"
ELECTRIC PROBE UNDER SEAT
WERY PAINFUL BUT BETTER THAN NAILS POUNDED INTO SKULL
STOP IT!
SOMETIMES HOT COALS PUT IN MOUTH BUT HIS SCREAMS ARE TOO CLEAR
SO PERHAPS THEY "MAKE SNAKE" WITH HIM THAT IS WHAT WE CALL SLICING TONGUE IN HALF, DOWN MIDDLE
YOU TRYING TO TORTURE ME?! WHO THE HECK ARE YOU TWO, ANYWAY?!

SERGEANT-MAJOR FOMICHEV HE IS SERGEANT KULIKOV
WE WERE CAPTURED TRYING TO ASSASSINATE COMRADE BORODIN NOW WE WAIT FOR SAME TREATMENT YOUR FRIEND IS ENJOYING
APOLOGIES, DEVUSHKA YOU ARE IN BASEMENT OF CHEKA HEADQUARTERS ONLY WAY OUT FOR ANY OF US IS THROUGH CREMATORIUM CHIMNEY
IS OUR OWN FAULT IF WE ARE TAKEN ALIVE THEN WE ARE NO GOOD FOR SPETSNAZ
THERE'S THAT WORD AGAIN "SPETS NATS" WHAT IS THAT AND HOW COME YOU SPEAK MY LANGUAGE SO WELL ANYWAY?
SPETSNAZ IS RODINAN SPECIAL FORCES BEST SOLDIER IN WHOLE WORLD
PAY-GRADE INCREASES TEN PERCENT FOR EACH NEW LANGUAGE WE LEARN SO
I'M NOT SURE IF THAT'S A BLESSING OR A CURSE I MEAN, AT LEAST WE CAN TALK, BUT WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY SCARES THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF ME!
MAKE PEACE WITH IT WE ARE STUCK HERE, ALL ALONE WITH EACH OTHER, FOR REST OF OUR LIVES
SO, YOU GUYS THINK WE'RE ALONE IN HERE?
THAT'S NOT HOW I SEE IT
WHAT YOU ARE DOING ?

BOZHESTVO MOI!
NOW WHO'S SCARED?

SEE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE?!
The Marbleton Post
FINAL EDITION
Rodinan Ambassador Flee
Country Following Fiasco
Congress; War Imminen
Empyrean Rodina Now Face Test of Will
President Heeds History's Lesson
Bombers Are On Standby
THWAP

AMBASSADOR BORODIN --!
YOUR LITTLE "STUNT" DURING MY ADDRESS TO YOUR CONGRESS HAS DESTABILIZED INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. NUCLEAR FORCES ARE ON HIGH ALERT!
WHAT GOOD DID YOU EXPECT TO ACCOMPLISH BY MAKING THEM SEE ME AS MONSTER?

YOU ARE A MONSTER!
WHY EVEN BOTHER WITH THE HUMAN FACE? EVERYONE IN HERE KNOWS WHAT YOU REALLY ARE!

YOU ARE CORRECT. WHY PRETEND?

OF COURSE, THIS IS NOT MY TRUE FACE. EITHER. BUT YOU DO NOT GET TO SEE THAT
NOW COME, STARKWEATHER -- WE HAVE QUESTIONS

ARE YOU
ARE YOU GOING TO TORTURE ME ?
NYET WE TORTURE YOUR FRIEND WHILE YOU WATCH
YOU CAN SPARE HIM PAIN BY TELLING US HOW YOU CAN SEE PAST OUR DAY-FACES . .
AND HOW YOU MANAGED DEFEAT OF BYLETH AND TENEBR'ON SOMEONE MUST BE HELPING YOU, hmm ?
THESE CELLS THEY'RE ALL FILLED WITH GHOSTS
OUR PERMANENT GUESTS-- DISSIDENTS OF YESTERYEAR
WHY HAVEN'T THEY Y'KNOW MOVED ON?
WE HAVE RATHER UNIQUE SITUATION IN RODINA THAT BINDS SPIRITS TO MOTHERLAND
THEN WHY KEEP THEM HERE? I THOUGHT YOU PEOPLE SENT ALL THE SOULS YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON TO THAT "PERDITION" PLACE
WE ALREADY MEET YEARLONG QUOTA
AND IF YOU LEARN ONE THING IN COMMUNIST STATE, IS NOT TO EXCEED WHAT IS REQUIRED
OR ELSE PARTY RAISES QUOTA NEXT YEAR

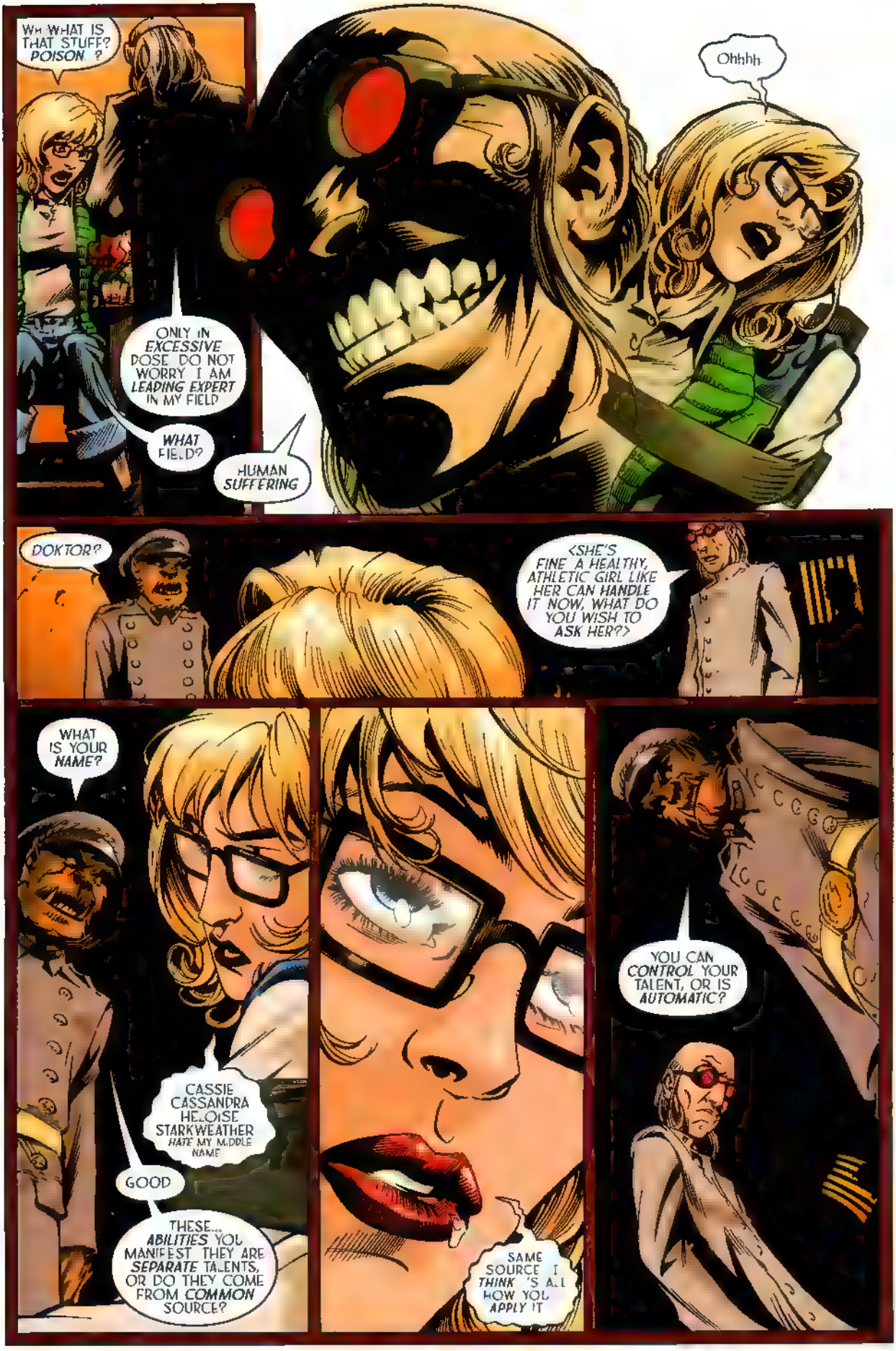
DID YOU GET ANYTHING USEFUL OUT OF HIM ?
NOTHING BEYOND HIS MISGUIDED DEVOTION TO THE GIRL
CISCO~!
FILE HIS TEETH
NO, WAIT~!
SKRRRRRRP
AAAAGGK~!
DAMMIT! YOU DIDN'T EVEN ASK ME ANYTHING!
BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW THE QUESTIONS
HOW DO YOU DO IT? WHO HELPS YOU AGAINST US?

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT WORKS!
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO SEE GHOSTS EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE!
NO CASSIE STOP
THEN, A FEW MONTHS AGO, THE GHOST OF MY GRANDFATHER CAME TO ME AND TOUCHED MY HEAD--
AND SUDDENLY I WAS ABLE TO SEE YOU MONSTER-PEOPLE TRYING TO PASS FOR HUMAN
LATER, I FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE OTHERS SEE YOU, TOO
AND WHEN THOSE DARK SPIRIT THINGS SHOWED UP TO STEAL PEOPLE'S SOULS, I LEARNED HOW TO SUCK OUT THEIR BADNESS AND TURN THEM GOOD!
MAYBE I CAN DO MORE BUT THAT'S ALL I KNOW SO FAR!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT--
--AND I DON'T KNOW HOW IT WORKS!
NOW, PLEASE *sob* PLEASE DON'T HURT HIM ANYMORE
<I BELIEVE HER. THE REST OF THE ANSWERS MUST BE LOCKED IN HER SUBCONSCIOUS, WHERE ONLY THE TRUTH SERUM CAN REVEAL THEM>
<YOU PROMISED I COULD VIVISECT HER BRAIN>
<EVERYTHING IN ITS TURN, DOCTOR. FIRST, THE SERUM>

<COME TAKE THIS USELESS PIG OUT OF HERE!>
<AT ONCE, COMRADE DOCTOR!>
nnnhhh.
KILL YOU, SONOVA
=urk=
THUMP
IDIOT!
=guhh=
KRASHHH
I CAN HAVE HIM AFTER WE FINISH HER?
CONSIDER IT YOUR HOLIDAY BONUS
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO LEAVE HIM ALONE IF I COOPERATED!
I PROMISE NO SUCH THING

<YOU THINK THEY'RE STILL IN HERE?>
<MAYBE THEY ALWAYS ARE I'M ONLY GLAD I DO NOT SEE THOSE GHASTLY THINGS ALL OF THE TIME HOW DOES THE GIRL STAND IT?>
<PERHAPS WE CAN'T SEE THEM BUT THE DEAD CAN STILL SEE US, CAN'T THEY?>
<I JUST I HATE THE THOUGHT OF AN ENEMY THAT I CANNOT TOUCH, OR SHOOT, OR SMASH >
KREEEEE
→whung←
<MUST BE THE GIRL'S COMPANION.>
Ohhhhhn
<IS THAT A CIGARETTE UP HIS NOSE ?>
nhheh-ha-huh-hahaha →koff←
HAHAHAHAH HAHAHAH...
HEY! EMPYREANSKI! WHY DO YOU LAUGH?
<THEY BROKE HIS MIND, I THINK>

:snff:... YOU GUYS PRISONERS?
YOU SURE SMELL LIKE PRISONERS
DA, SAME AS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDGIRL!
APOLOGIES YOU WILL NOT SEE HER AGAIN SHE SEEMED WERY NICE
Y'KNOW, IT'D BE JUST LIKE YOU REDS..TO PUT A FAKE PRISONER IN MY CELL GAIN MY TRUST PUMP ME FOR MORE INFO
AS IF YOU KEPT ANYTHING FROM THE DOKTOR--!
WE HEARD YOU SCREAM LIKE GIRL BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT US, BUT YOU LEFT NO SECRETS IN HIS CHAMBER
ACTUALLY I DID GET OUT OF THAT ROOM WITH ONE SECRET
SNATCHED IT FROM HIS TOOL CART WHEN I KNOCKED IT OVER
YOU'D BETTER GET STARTED BEFORE THEY MISS IT


WH-WHAT IS THAT STUFF? POISON ?
ONLY IN EXCESSIVE DOSE DO NOT WORRY I AM LEADING EXPERT IN MY FIELD
WHAT FIELD?
HUMAN SUFFERING
Ohhhh
DOKTOR?
<SHE'S FINE A HEALTHY, ATHLETIC GIRL LIKE HER CAN HANDLE IT NOW, WHAT DO YOU WISH TO ASK HER?>
WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
CASSIE CASSANDRA HELOISE STARKWEATHER HATE MY MIDDLE NAME
GOOD
THESE... ABILITIES YOU MANIFEST THEY ARE SEPARATE TALENTS, OR DO THEY COME FROM COMMON SOURCE?
SAME SOURCE I THINK 'S ALL HOW YOU APPLY IT
YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR TALENT, OR IS AUTOMATIC?

I'M GETTING BETTER AT CONTROLLING IT.
<DO YOU SEE THAT--?!>
DA, TOVARISCH DOKTOR
<IT SEEMS TO COME FROM BENEATH HER HAIR>
<SHE DID SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HER GRANDFATHER TOUCHING HER HEAD.>
<LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK>
DOKTOR ?
<Oh, DON'T BE SUCH AN OLD HEN. I'LL HAVE TO SHAVE HER TO REMOVE HER BRAIN EVENTUALLY>
BOZHESTVO MOI!
<WHAT WHAT IS THAT THING ?>
C C

(ALMOST THERE)
uhrrrr
gunhh
=GAH=
=URK= EASY, NOW
HURRY--!
WHERE'S ALL THE GUARDS?
PROBABLY REASSIGNED DUR NG CURRENT CRISIS
ALSO BOROD N WOULD BE WANTING FEW WITNESSES TO YOJR PRESENCE HERE NOW BE SILENT

KRUNK
<DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN THEY STORED OUR GEAR ON THIS LEVEL?>
<NO, MISHA, BUT WE'RE LONG PAST DUE FOR SOME GOOD LUCK .>
NYET NYET
WHAT'S HE LOOKING FOR?
WEAPON
YOU MEAN LIKE ALL THE ONES HE'S CASTING ASIDE ?
SPETSNAZ WEAPON

«JACKPOT!!»
A SHOVEL—?!
YOU WILL *SEE* IN HANDS OF *SPETSNAZ*, IS SO MUCH *MORE*

<THAT CANNOT BE A TATTOO>
<HOW DOES IT FLOURESCE ?>
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD
MEDICINE MAKING ME SICK
HAVE TO GET IT OUT GET
...OUT-!

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU PEOPLE REALLY, REALLY LOOK LIKE
NO MORE MONSTER-MOVIE CRAP FINALLY, THE TRUTH
WHAT ABOUT YOU, BALDY?
I I AM NOT OF THEIR KIND
ONLY HUMAN!
EVEN WORSE! YOU'VE GOT NO EXCUSE!
<NO YOU ARE THE MONSTER!!>
=HURK=
THWAPP

<I'LL TAKE THE BIG ONE, MISHA!>
<GENTLEMEN >
SKREEE!!
< DINNER IS SERVED!>
SKREEEEEEE
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

WAIT--
CHOK
I LIKE YOUR FRIENDS
NOT HALF BAD FOR COMMIES
CISCO!
Oh, CISCO LOOK WHAT THEY VE DONE TO YOU
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE... I THINK I'M OVER MY SMOKING HABIT .
REUNION CAN WAIT WE MUST LEAVE NOW, BEFORE ENTIRE BUILDING IS ON LOCKDOWN!

Lady Death: THE WILD HUNT PREVIEW INSIDE!

"BEST HORROR TITLE 2003."
— Comixtreme.com

# Route 666™

CrossGen
#21 APRIL 2004

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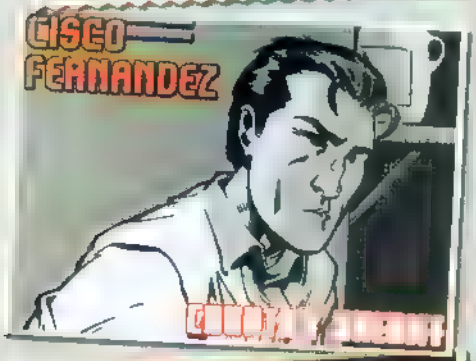

# Greetings From... PEOPLE'S REPUBLIK OF RODINA

DEAR MOM & DAD,

I'M NOT SURE IF THIS LETTER WILL EVER MAKE IT BACK HOME TO YOU. CISCO AND I WERE KIDNAPPED BY THE RODINAN AMBASSADOR AND FLOWN BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN. WE'RE OKAY NOW, BUT HOW WE GOT HERE IS ANOTHER STORY.

YOU PROBABLY HEARD ON THE NEWS THAT THERE WAS A MINI-RIOT IN CONGRESS THE OTHER NIGHT DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH. THAT'S BECAUSE THE AMBASSADOR IS SECRETLY ONE OF THOSE CREEPS WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING. I USED MY "GIFT" TO EXPOSE HIM AT THE PODIUM, AND ALL THOSE OLD SENATORS SAW THAT HE'S REALLY A MONSTER DISGUISED AS A PERSON. I THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP GET SOMEBODY TO TAKE MY WARNINGS SERIOUSLY. INSTEAD, FROM WHAT I HEAR, WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF WAR NOW. I GUESS "SORRY" DOESN'T REALLY CUT IT AT A TIME LIKE THIS, DOES IT?

ANYHOW, CISCO AND I MET A COUPLE OF RODINAN SOLDIERS WHO'LL HELP US GET BACK HOME. SERGEANT FOMICHEV AND SERGEANT KULIKOV SAVED OUR LIVES. SOMETIMES YOU MAKE FRIENDS WHERE YOU LEAST EXPECT TO FIND THEM, HUH? I'LL BE HOME AS SOON AS I CAN!

LOVE,
CASSIE

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MORNING, GENT..EMEN WHAT'S THE *LATEST* ON THE END OF THE WORLD?
PRESIDENT CAR..SON, *SIR!* WE'VE JUST RAISED OUR DEFENSE POSTURE TO THREATCON *TWO*
RAISE IT ANY *MORE*, AND THE MISSILES ARE IN THE AIR, huh?
YESSIR, MISTER PRESIDENT
S.T BACK DOWN, EVERYONE LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT *BE* HERE FOR A WHILE
GENERAL, WHAT EXACTLY DOES THREATCON TWO ENTAIL, SINCE WE'VE NEVER REACHED IT *BEFORE*--AND PRAYED WE NEVER *WOULD* ?
WELL, SIR, THERE'S *FOUR* MAJOR OPERATIONAL ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

"STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND SCRAMBLED EVERY AVAILABLE BOMBER. THEY'RE TAKING POSITIONS NEAR THEIR FAIL-SAFE POINTS, AWAITING FURTHER ORDERS
"OUR MISSILE CREWS ARE PREPPING ICBMs TO WIPE MOST MAJOR RODINAN CITIES OFF THE MAP IF THE REDS TRY ANYTHING FUNNY
"SAME GOES FOR EVERY BOOMER WE HAVE PARKED OFF THE RODINAN COAST. ADMIRAL SLADE CAN GIVE YOU MORE DETAILS ON THEIR DISPOSITION, SIR
"SUFFICE TO SAY, OUR SUBS COULD MELT THE IRON CURTAIN ALL BY THEMSELVES
"AND WE HAVE FIVE ARMORED DIVISIONS ON STANDBY ALONG THE D.M.Z. IN CADMIA
"THEY'RE READY TO ROLL WITH TACTICAL NUKES AND CONVENTIONAL ARTILLERY--WHATEVER THE SITUATION CALLS FOR"

YES. THE SITUATION HOW DID WE EVER LET IT GET THIS FAR ?
IT WASN'T US! IT WAS THAT NEW AMBASSADOR THE COMMIES SENT OVER!
HIS PEOPLE MURDERED SEVEN CAPITOL POLICE OFFICERS AND LEFT 'EM PILED UP IN A STINKIN' PHONE BOOTH WHILE THAT COMMIE RAT JUST ABOUT STARTED A RIOT IN CONGRESS!
YOU JUST SAY THE WORD, BENNY, AND I'LL -
DIRECTOR PURVIS, I KNOW WE GO BACK A LONG WAY, BUT THIS BEING THE WAR ROOM AND ALL WHAT SAY WE KEEP IT FORMAL?
RIGHT, BEN - er, MISTER PRESIDENT
I DON'T MEAN TO RAP YOUR KNUCKLES
NO, I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, SIR MY OLD COLLEGE CHUM BENNY CARLSON WOULD NEVER START A NUCLEAR BARBECUE
BUT MISTER PRESIDENT WILL DO WHATEVER HE DAMN WELL HAS TO IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR WAY OF LIFE!
EXACTLY
DIRECTOR DALLAS, HAS THE O.S.S. DETERMINED WHAT HAPPENED DURING AMBASSADOR BORODIN'S SPEECH?
NOT QUITE WE DEBRIEFED FORTY-SEVEN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AND THEIR STORIES ALL MATCH UP
THEY ALL CLAIM THAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SPEECH THE AMBASSADOR SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A WELL, A "WOLF-MAN"

A FEW OF THE SENATORS ALSO SAID THE AMBASSADOR'S ENTOURAGE TURNED INTO *MUMMIES* AND *VAMPIRES* AND SUCH
AS YOU CAN SEE, THE COMMUNIST DELEGATION ALL LOOK *NORMAL* ON THE SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE, SO WHAT WE HAVE MUST BE SOME KIND OF *MASS HALLUCINATION*
WHAT COULD *CAUSE* THAT?
WE'RE NOT SURE. A *DRUG*? MAYBE SOME KIND OF GAS RELEASED IN THE AUDITORIUM, BUT *WHY*?
WHAT DO THE RODINANS *GAIN* FROM SUCH A STUNT? AND WHY KILL THE POLICEMEN?
TO COVER THEIR *ESCAPE*?
WHAT IS IT, DALLAS? THERE'S SOMETHING *ELSE* YOU'RE NOT SAYING *ISN'T* THERE?
WELL, WHAT THE CONGRESSMEN SAW IT *FITS* WITH SOME EARLIER REPORTS OUT OF RODINA
YEARS AGO, THE REDS HAD AN *ACCIDENT* AT THEIR ADSKU MUNITIONS COMBINE *SUVOROV* WAS STILL IN CHARGE AND HE KEPT A TIGHT *LID* ON IT WITHOUT THE SATELLITE, WE'D'VE NEVER FOUND OUT
ANYHOW, SHORTLY AFTERWARD, WE GOT SOME REPORTS FROM INFORMANTS IN THE REGION, CLAIMING THEY'D SEEN *MONSTERS* NEAR ADSKU.
OF COURSE, WE DISMISSED IT AS *SUPERSTITION*, BUT NOW I WONDER IF THEY WEREN'T DEVELOPING SOME KIND OF *PSYCHOLOGICAL WEAPON* TO CONFUSE THE *ENEMY* ON THE BATTLEFIELD
*SPEAKING* OF THE ENEMY, WHAT ARE THE RODINANS *DOING* RIGHT NOW?
SAME AS *US*, MISTER PRESIDENT

" THEY'RE POINTING EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT OUR WAY AND RELEASING THE SAFETY"
<CAREFUL WITH THOSE, YURI!>
<THESE NEW WEAPONS ARE VERY TEMPERMENTAL!>
<WHAT EXACTLY ARE THEY, COMRADE CREW CHIEF?>
<I MEAN, ARE THEY ATOM BOMBS, OR NOT? THAT SYMBOL IT'S NEW >
<YOU WANT TO GO TO ADSKIJ AND ASK THEM?>
<NO, SIR! SORRY, SIR!>
<DIDN'T THINK SO. NOW CHECK THAT STRAP! THE BUCKLE LOOKS-->

<--LOOSE!>
KLATCH
ZZZZZIPP
>WHUP<
SLAM

<CONTAINMENT BREACH!!>
<WAIT! LET US OUT FIRST!>
<CAN'T! WE HAVE OUR ORDERS!>
NYET!
KRUNK
NYET!
<HEY, CALM DOWN! WE'RE NOT DEAD YET! COME BACK HERE AND HELP ME CLEAN UP THIS MESS!>
<SO WE GET A MONTH IN QUARANTINE! SO WHAT?>
<AT LEAST WE DIDN'T SET OFF THIS THING'S DETONATOR--!>

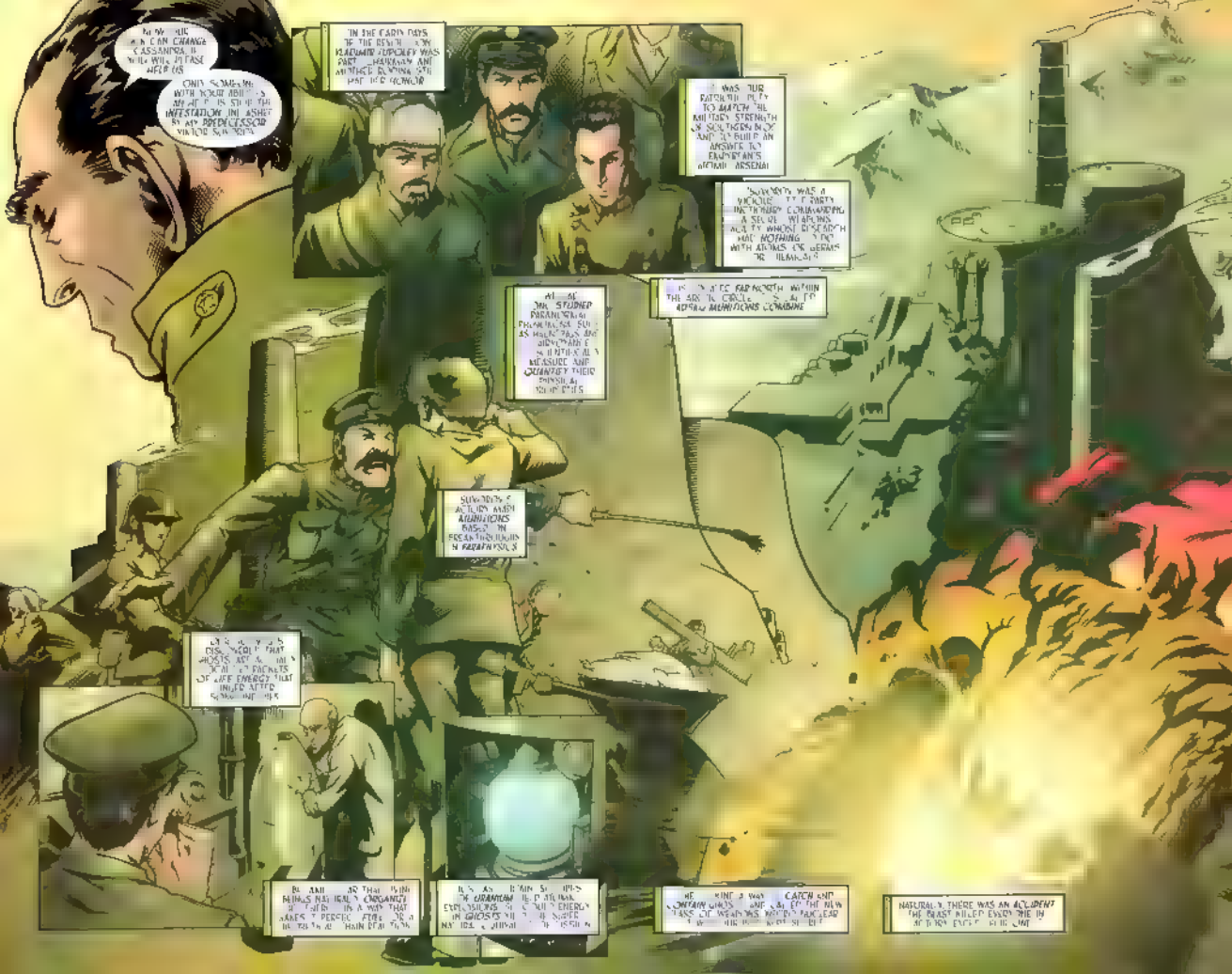
WHAT?!

EASY THERE, IVAN! YOU'RE GONNA ROLL THIS THING IF YOU AIN'T CAREFUL!
SKREEEEEE
SECRET POLICE SEARCH EVERYWHERE FOR US, AND YOU COMPLAIN BECAUSE RIDE IS TOO BUMPY?!
ALL I'M SAYIN' IS IT'S SMARTER TO DRIVE A STOLEN VEHICLE INCONSPICUOUSLY
CUT 'EM SOME SLACK, CISCO THEY SAVED OUR BUTTS FROM THE TORTURE CHAMBER
BUT WE ARE NOT OUT OF DANGER YET, DEVUSHKA
OKAY COME IN
THIS IS SAFE HOUSE, KEPT BY MY SUPERIORS
YOU WAIT HERE WHILE I MAKE REPORT TO THEM
TELL 'EM WE WANT A FIRST-CLASS TICKET HOME, PRONTO!

KLATCH
KLAK
chCHK
kCHUK
OKAY, WE'LL FLY "ECONOMY"
<SASHA, PUT DOWN THE GUN! IT'S ME!>
<HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN? YOU WERE CAPTURED THREE WEEKS AGO!>
<WE DID DEMOLITION TRAINING TOGETHER. I RIGGED THE LATRINES TO COLLAPSE WITH OUR DRILL SERGEANT INSIDE! YOU THREW UP ON MY SISTER! IT'S REALLY ME!>
<WHEN WORD CAME THAT MY SPETSNAZ BOYS HAD ESCAPED THE CHEKA, I COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE IT>
<WHEN I HEARD WHOM YOU BROUGHT OUT WITH YOU, I KNEW MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.>
<WHEN WORD CAME THAT MY SPETSNAZ BOYS HAD ESCAPED THE CHEKA, I COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE IT>
<WHEN I HEARD WHOM YOU BROUGHT OUT WITH YOU, I KNEW MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.>

FORGIVE ME, CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER I MUST REMEMBER TO SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE
IT IS NOT LIKE ME TO BE SO UNCULTURED BUT, THEN, MANY IN RODINA ARE NOT QUITE THEMSELVES THESE DAYS
MY NAME IS ZHENYA POPOV I AM PREMIER OF RODINA, CHAIRMAN OF PEOPLE'S PARTY
AND I HAVE WANTED TO MEET YOU FOR SOME TIME NOW
YOU HAVE ?
WE TAKE TALENTS LIKE YOURS VERY SERIOUSLY IN RODINA
WE MAY LAG BEHIND EMPYREAN IN TERMS OF MISSILE TECHNOLOGY, AND OUR CONVENTIONAL ARSENAL MAY SEEM "CLUNKY" TO SOME—
BUT OUR DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE WARFARE IS SECOND TO NONE
PSYCHIC RECONNAISSANCE TRANSDIMENSIONAL INCURSIONS NECRO-NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY
WHAT KIND OF COMMIE HOGWASH ARE YOU SPOUTIN' !?
I'VE HAD PEOPLE FOLLOWING YOUR MOVEMENTS EVER SINCE YOU KILLED ALEXANDER MELCHIOR AND ESCAPED HIS MENTAL FACILITY
HE WAS RATHER HIGH RANKING WITH THE OTHER SIDE, YOU KNOW?

THE "OTHER SIDE"?
A PLACE CALLED PERDITION
YOU KNOW ABOUT PERDITION?!
YOU HAVE RECENTLY DISCOVERED THAT YOUR COUNTRY IS QUIETLY UNDER ATTACK BY MONSTERS FROM THIS CURSED PLACE
YOU WORRY THAT UNLESS STOPPED THEY MAY ASSUME CONTROL OF EMPYREAN
YOU ARE RIGHT TO WORRY
MY COUNTRY WAS ALL BUT CONQUERED BY THEM LAST YEAR
IN FACT I HAVE BEEN RUNNING FROM MY OWN GOVERNMENT FOR MONTHS THE MAN YOU SEE ON NEWS REPORTS THESE DAYS IS NOT CHAIRMAN POPOV
HE IS ONE OF THEM
NO THANKS I BETTER SEE A DENTIST FIRST
YOU'RE SAYING ONE'A THE BLOODSUCKERS MADE HIMSELF LOOK LIKE YOU AND TOOK YOUR PLACE?
DA
SO HOW COME YOU'RE STILL BREATHIN'?
THESE MEN ARE MY PERSONAL GUARD THEY ARE ALL SPETSNAZ-- BEST SOLDIERS IN THE WHOLE WORLD THEY KEEP ME ALIVE
THEY ALSO CARRY OUT ATTEMPTS TO TAKE BACK OUR COUNTRY THOSE TWO YOU ESCAPED WITH? SERGEANTS KULIKOV AND FOMICHEV? WEEKS AGO, I SENT THEM TO ASSASSINATE MY IMPOSTOR
BUT EVEN THE BEST MEN SOMETIMES RUN INTO WERY BAD LUCK



IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION, KLAUMIR TUPOLEV WAS PART CHAIRMAN AND MOTHER RUNNING STILL HAD HER HONOR
WAS OUR PATRIOTIC DUTY TO MATCH THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF SOUTHERN BLOC AND TO BUILD AN ANSWER TO EMPYREAN'S ATOMIC ARSENAL
SUVOROV WAS A VICIOUS TYPE PARTY INCTIONARY COMMANDING A SECRET WEAPONS ACTIVITY WHOSE RESEARCH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ATOMS OR GERMS OR CHEMICALS
ONE STUDIED PARANORMAL PHENOMENA SUCH AS HALLUCINATIONS AND AIRVOYANCE SCIENTIFICALLY MEASURE AND QUANTIFY THEIR PHYSICAL PROPERTIES
ADSAU MUNITIONS COMBINE
SUVOROV'S ACTIVITY MADE MUNITIONS BASED ON FREAKTHROUGHS IN PARAPHYSICS
DISCOVERED THAT GHOSTS ARE ACTUALLY SOCIAL LIFE PACKETS OF LIFE ENERGY THAT LINGER AFTER SOMEONE DIES
BEING NATURALLY ORGANIZED AND ENERGY IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT PERFECT FUEL FOR A HAIN REACTION
THE URANIUM SHIELD ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS SUCH AS THE ENERGY IN GHOSTS
CATCH AND CONTAIN GHOSTS AND CALLED THE NEW CLASS OF WEAPONS
NATURALLY, THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT THE BLAST KILLED EVERYONE IN ACTORY EXCEPT FOUR ONE

"I THINK IT SPARED SUVOROV *ON PURPOSE*.

"THE EXPLOSION ALSO LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND: A PERMANENT *GATEWAY*...

"I THINK SUVOROV STRUCK A ***BARGAIN*** WITH WHATEVER CAME THROUGH THAT PORTAL.

"I HAVE SINCE LEARNED THAT SOLDIERS OF PERDITION CALL THEIR MASTER '***THE ADVERSARY***.' SUVOROV SOLD HIS ***SOUL*** TO THIS DEVIL, IN EXCHANGE FOR ***POWER***.

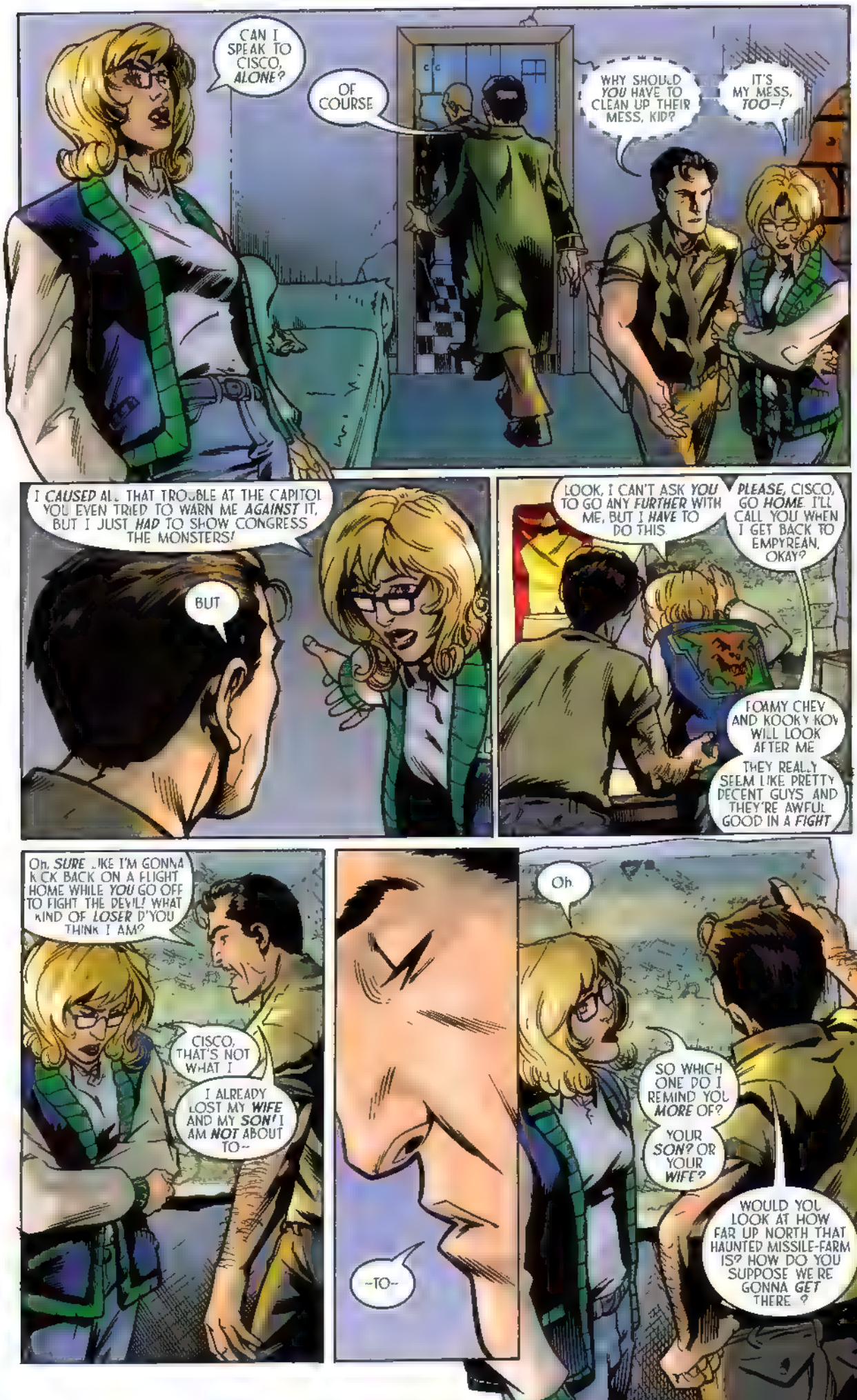
"SUVOROV ROSE ***QUICKLY*** IN PARTY HIERARCHY. WITHIN THREE YEARS, TUPOLEV WAS DEAD AND SUVOROV TOOK HIS PLACE.

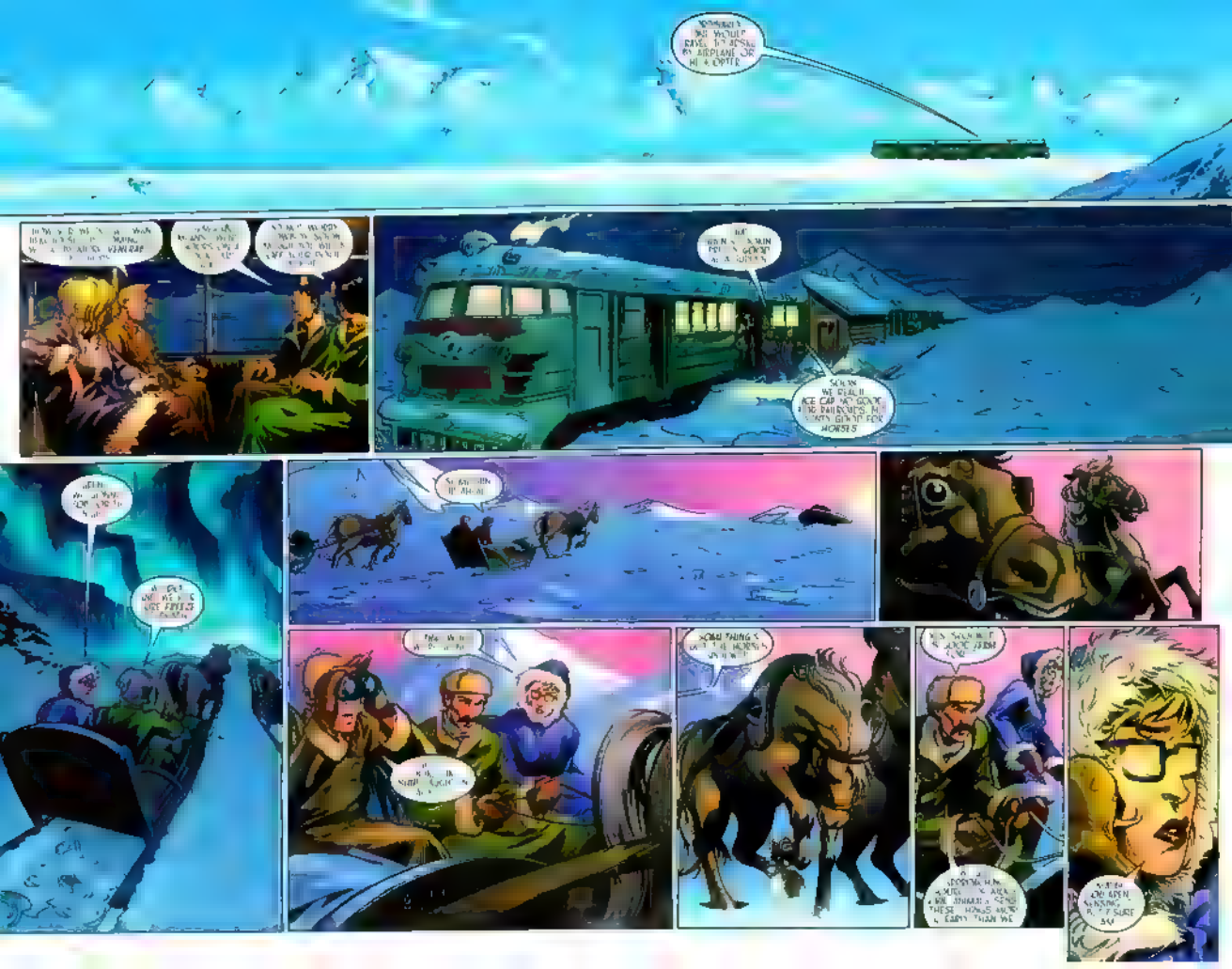
"THE ***PURGES*** AND ***FAMINES*** AND TOTAL SUBVERSION OF OUR COMMUNIST ***VALUES*** BEGAN SOON AFTER...

"WE FINALLY ***SHOT*** SUVOROV SEVERAL YEARS AGO, BUT NOT BEFORE HE ***BANKRUPTED*** OUR COUNTRY, ***PURGED*** OUR PEOPLE, AND OPENED OUR CORRIDORS OF POWER TO THE ***BEASTS*** FROM PERDITION."

I BECAME CHAIRMAN ***KNOWING*** MY *POLITBURO* WAS INFILTRATED, BUT WHAT COULD I ***DO?*** WE ***STILL*** CANNOT TELL REAL HUMANS FROM DEMONS IN DISGUISE.

BUT YOU CAN!
CASSANDRA STARKWEATHER, I WOULD NOT ASK SUCH DANGEROUS THING OF YOU FOR MYSELF, BUT FOR MY PEOPLE I BEG IT!
ADSKU MUNITIONS COMBINE OPERATES ONCE AGAIN. THE GATEWAY TO PERDITION LIES WITHIN, AND WE MUST CLOSE IT IF THE WORLD IS TO SURVIVE
MY MEN CAN SEAL THE BREACH BETWEEN WORLDS, BUT ONLY WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU TO GUIDE THEM AND DISTINGUISH FRIEND FROM FOE
KULIKOV AND I WILL CARRY OUT MISSION, WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR SECOND SIGHT
THEN MAKE IT "WITHOUT" SHE'S A COLLEGE KID, NOT A SOLDIER!
MISTER FERNANDEZ, MY CONTACTS TELL ME THAT SINCE THE INCIDENT IN YOUR CAPITOL BUILDING, RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED
MILITARY FORCES ON BOTH SIDES ARE ON HIGH ALERT. WE ARE ONE MISTAKE OR LAPSE IN JUDGMENT AWAY FROM MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION
I AM NOT PROUD TO ASK A GIRL TO SAVE US, BUT I AM DESPERATE FOR A WAY TO RESCUE MY COUNTRY AND YOURS
AND I KNOW THOSE WHO SERVE THE ADVERSARY FEAR YOUR COMPANION
I THINK THEY MUST FEAR HER FOR GOOD REASON, NYET?


CAN I SPEAK TO CISCO, ALONE?
OF COURSE
WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE TO CLEAN UP THEIR MESS, KID?
IT'S MY MESS, TOO--!
I CAUSED ALL THAT TROUBLE AT THE CAPITOL YOU EVEN TRIED TO WARN ME AGAINST IT, BUT I JUST HAD TO SHOW CONGRESS THE MONSTERS!
BUT
LOOK, I CAN'T ASK YOU TO GO ANY FURTHER WITH ME, BUT I HAVE TO DO THIS
PLEASE, CISCO, GO HOME. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I GET BACK TO EMPYREAN, OKAY?
FOAMY CHEV AND KOOKY KOY WILL LOOK AFTER ME
THEY REALLY SEEM LIKE PRETTY DECENT GUYS AND THEY'RE AWFUL GOOD IN A FIGHT
Oh, SURE. LIKE I'M GONNA KICK BACK ON A FLIGHT HOME WHILE YOU GO OFF TO FIGHT THE DEVIL! WHAT KIND OF LOSER D'YOU THINK I AM?
CISCO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I
I ALREADY LOST MY WIFE AND MY SON! I AM NOT ABOUT TO--
--TO--
Oh.
SO WHICH ONE DO I REMIND YOU MORE OF?
YOUR SON? OR YOUR WIFE?
WOULD YOU LOOK AT HOW FAR UP NORTH THAT HAUNTED MISSILE-FARM IS? HOW DO YOU SUPPOSE WE'RE GONNA GET THERE?



"...SOMETHING HAPPENED ON THAT SHIP. SOMETHING BAD...
"...AND IT AIN'T OVER YET..."

# Route 666

CrossGen
#22 JUNE 2004

Tony Bedard
Karl Moline
Rick Magyar
Sumi Pak

# Greetings From... PEOPLE'S REPUBLIK OF RODINA

DEAR MOM & DAD,

I'M WRITING THIS IN A HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH BUMPING ALONG ACROSS THE POLAR ICE CAP WITH MY FINGERS FREEZING, SO FORGIVE THE SLOPPY PENMANSHIP. THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME I CAN WRITE TO YOU, AND THERE'S NO WAY TO MAIL THIS LETTER OUT HERE, SO IF YOU EVER DO RECEIVE IT, IT PROBABLY MEANS I'M DEAD.

CISCO AND THOSE TWO RODINAN SOLDIERS I TOLD YOU ABOUT, FOMICHEV AND KULIKOV, ARE ESCORTING ME OUT TO A PLACE WHERE I'M TOLD THAT THERE'S A GATEWAY TO PERDITION. IT'S WHERE ALL THE MONSTER-FOLK IN RODINA COME FROM AND WE HOPE WE CAN CLOSE THAT GATE FOR GOOD. I ONLY HOPE YOU'RE PRAYING FOR US, BECAUSE WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET.

ANYHOW, WE'VE COME ACROSS A SHIP THAT'S LODGED IN THE ICE. LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN HERE FOR YEARS. I DON'T LIKE THE "VIBES" I'M GETTING FROM IT, BUT WE HAVE TO CHECK IT OUT. I HOPE THIS ISN'T A MISTAKE...

LOVE,
CASSIE

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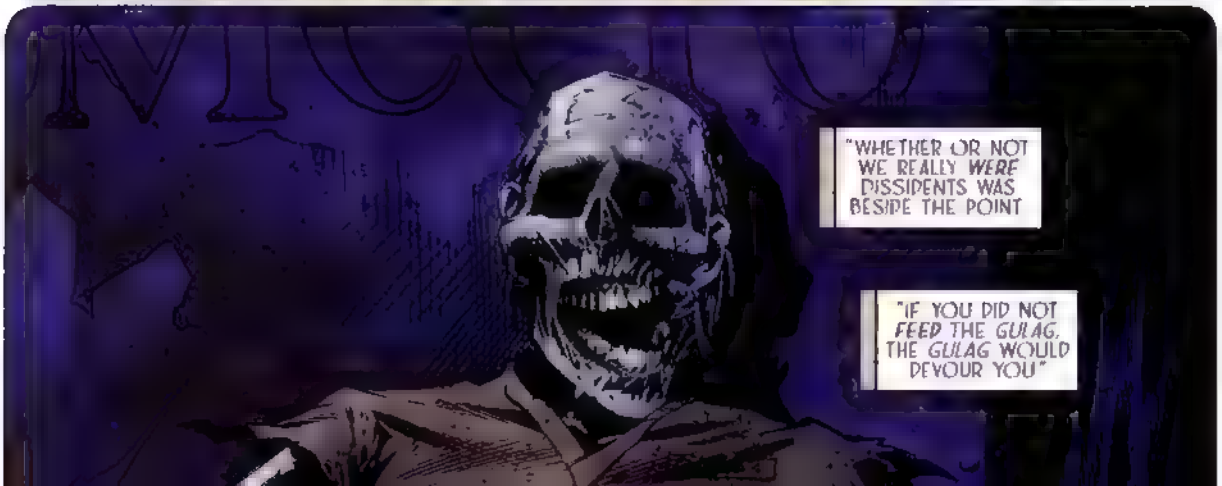
"SUVOROV ONCE SAID, A SINGLE DEATH IS A TRAGEDY, A MILLION DEATHS IS A STATISTIC"
"HE PROBABLY THOUGHT HE WAS BEING FUNNY

"ME AND MY FELLOW STATISTICS NEVER QUITE GOT THE JOKE

"I WAS ROUNDED UP IN THE SECOND GREAT PURGE OF SUVOROV'S REIGN
"MY CRIME WAS THAT I WORE GLASSES, SO I LOOKED A LITTLE TOO INTELLECTUAL TO WHOEVER FINGERED ME AS A 'COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY'

"I DO NOT BLAME MY ACCUSER THOUGH
"IN THOSE DAYS, WE HAD QUOTAS TO MEET. SUVOROV DEMANDED EACH PROVINCE ARREST THOUSANDS OF DISSIDENTS EVERY YEAR


"WHETHER OR NOT WE REALLY WERE DISSIDENTS WAS BESIDE THE POINT
"IF YOU DID NOT FEED THE GULAG, THE GULAG WOULD DEVOUR YOU"

MAYBE YOU WERE *RIGHT*, CASSIE!

MAYBE I *SHOULDN'T* POKE AROUND IN HERE

HAUUGGHHH
WHAT IS WRONG, DEVUSHKA? YOU EAT SOMETHING BAD MAYBE?
OOOOOHHH
IT'S THAT SHIP
CLOSER I GET THE WORSE I FEEL
COMRADE CISCO! DO NOT PROCEED ALONE!
WHAT'S WRONG?
WE ARE NOT KNOWING, BUT CASSIE IS OVERWHELMED! SOMETHING VERY WRONG WITH SHIP!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN

WHADDYA MEAN, "SOMETHING'S WRONG"?
JUST
JUST WAIT, CISCO! WE HAVE WORK TO DO IN THERE
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE THEM LIKE THIS
LEAVE WHO?
I DO NOT WANT TO KNOW

"AT THE HEIGHT OF THE *GREAT TERROR*, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF US WERE SHIPPED OFF TO THE *GULAG* EACH MONTH
"IT WAS A VAST LOGISTICAL EFFORT WE CAME TO CALL 'THE CONVEYOR'
"AND AN UNDERTAKING AS *EPIC* AS THE CONVEYOR DEMANDED INNOVATION THUS, THEY CREATED THE *SLAVE SHIPS*
"THE *INTERIORS* OF THE FREIGHTERS WERE REMADE INTO FLOATING *PRISONS*
"STEEL CAGES WERE STACKED AND WELDED, LIKE SOME GIANT *CHICKEN FARM*
"WE WERE COOPED. *FIVE* WOMEN PER CAGE, EACH CAGE ONLY THREE METERS SQUARE
"NOT A SQUARE CENTIMETER WAS WASTED. JUST ONE VESSEL HELD *TWELVE THOUSAND* PRISONERS!
"WITH NO WASHING FACILITIES, SWELTERING IN THAT DARK AND HELLISH PLACE...
"... WE ALL HAD *BOILS* AND *BLISTERS* AND OTHER AFFLICTIONS THAT MADE A RESTFUL SLEEP IMPOSSIBLE"

"WORST OF ALL WAS THE MAKESHIFT *LATRINE* WE WERE ALL FORCED TO SHARE
"RIGHT OUT IN THE OPEN, SURRENDERING ANY LAST SHRED OF *DIGNITY* WE MIGHT HAVE CLUNG TO, WE WOULD *PERCH* ALONGSIDE THE STINKING CASK AND EMPTY OUR BOWELS
"IN THE HALF-LIGHT, WE WERE LIKE SOME THING OUT OF THE DARKEST MYTH, MORE *HARPY* THAN HUMAN
"THERE WAS ONLY SO MUCH WE COULD TAKE BEFORE SOMEBODY *SNAPPED*, AND WE STRUCK OUT WITH ALL OF OUR FEAR AND DESPERATION
"THE CREW'S *ANSWER* TO OUR RIOT WAS AS *SIMPLE* AS IT WAS *EFFECTIVE*
"THEY GOT OUT THE FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND HOSED US DOWN WITH FREEZING *BILGE WATER* THE ICY FILTH DOUSED OUR SPARK OF REBELLION"

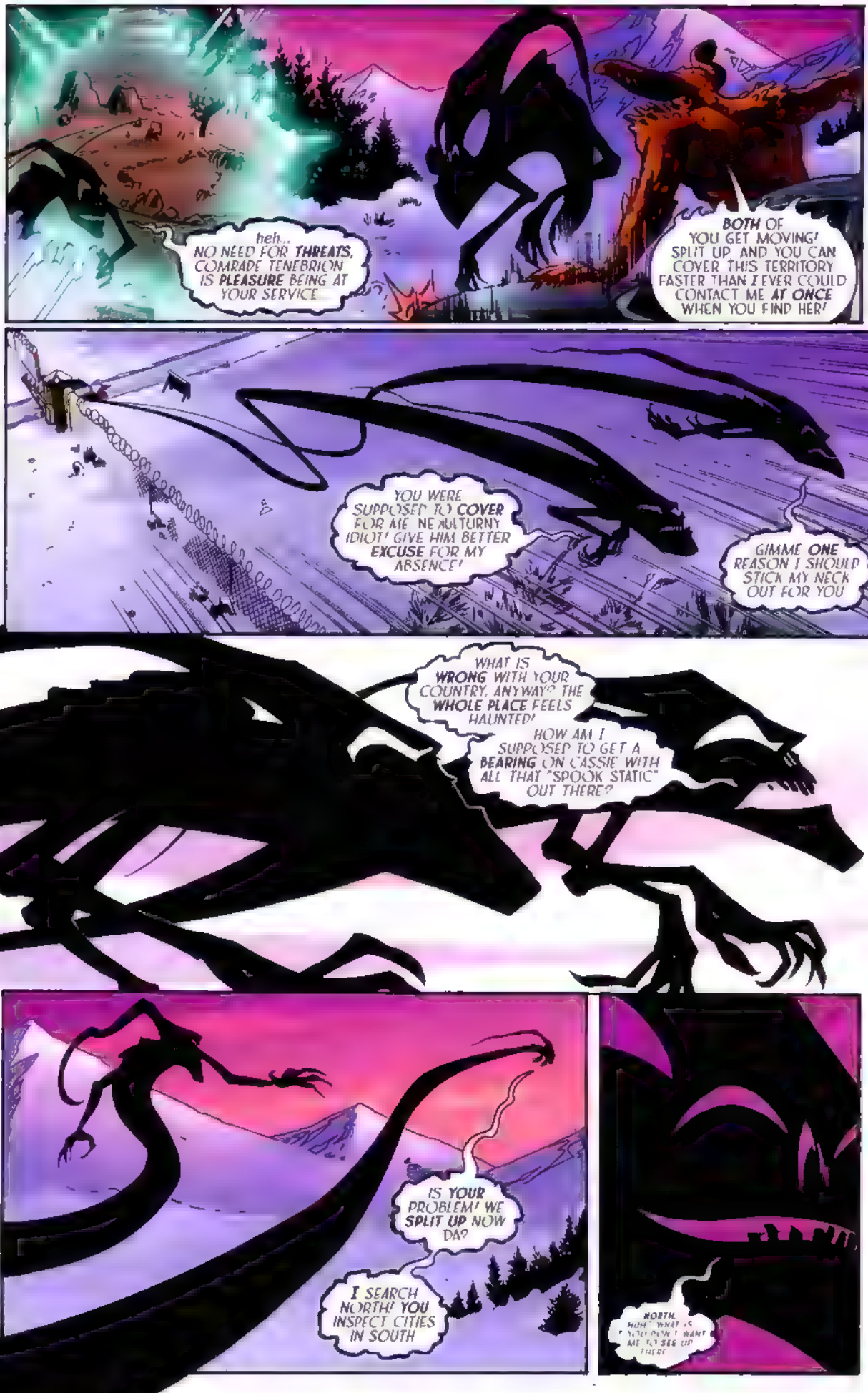
DID THEY EVER COME BACK AFTER THAT ?
WHAT?
NOTHING JUST THINKING OUT LOUD
I THOUGHT I SAW SOME PRETTY HAIRY STUFF BACK IN THE WAR, BUT
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME WERE THEY DOING IN HERE ?
IT WAS A SLAVE SHIP, CISCO TAKING PRISONERS TO THE CAMPS
THESE BODIES LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN HERE FOR YEARS THEY'RE NOT, YOU KNOW STILL AROUND, ARE THEY ?
YES CISCO THEY ARE

BUT I'M NOT GONNA HELP YOU *SEE* THEM. BELIEVE ME, IT'S *BETTER* THAT WAY
SHF

WHAT IS WRONG?!
GET AWAY!!
CASSIE ?
NO! TOO MANY--!
DON'T LET THEM TAKE MEEEEE..
CISCO!

ВНИМАНИЕ! ОДОБРЕННЫЙ ПУТЬ ТОЛЬКО
<YOUR DOCUMENTS, SIR?>
<YEAH, WELL FUNNY THING ABOUT MY PAPERS THEY, uh, SORT OF GOT CONFISCATED >
<IS IS THAT BLOOD LEAKING FROM YOUR TRUNK?!>
<THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU, COMRADE >
<SEE, THERE'S A LOT OF THESE ONE MAN CHECK-POINTS ON THIS ROAD, AND WITHOUT MY PAPERS
< LET'S JUST SAY I'VE BEEN FORCED TO COLLECT YOU GUYS AS I GO >
<HALT RIGHT THERE, OR I'LL-->
BLAM BLAM
AHHEEEE

BOUT FREAKIN' TIME
ONLY ONE OF YOU? WHERE'S SUVOROV?
SORRY, MISTER TANNER THE COMMIE'S NONE TOO KEEN ON RETURNING TO HIS OLD STOMPING GROUNDS
I DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT HE WANTS! I NEED SUVOROV!
CASSIE STARKWEATHER IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE IN THIS BACKWARDS COUNTRY, AND YOUR PARTNER KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND HERE! IF HE DOESN'T HELP ME FIND HER RIGHT NOW !


heh... NO NEED FOR THREATS, COMRADE TENEBRION IS PLEASURE BEING AT YOUR SERVICE
BOTH OF YOU GET MOVING! SPLIT UP AND YOU CAN COVER THIS TERRITORY FASTER THAN I EVER COULD CONTACT ME AT ONCE WHEN YOU FIND HER!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO COVER FOR ME NEMULTURNY IDIOT! GIVE HIM BETTER EXCUSE FOR MY ABSENCE!
GIMME ONE REASON I SHOULD STICK MY NECK OUT FOR YOU
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOUR COUNTRY, ANYWAY? THE WHOLE PLACE FEELS HAUNTED!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET A BEARING ON CASSIE WITH ALL THAT "SPOOK STATIC" OUT THERE?
IS YOUR PROBLEM! WE SPLIT UP NOW DA?
I SEARCH NORTH! YOU INSPECT CITIES IN SOUTH
NORTH. HUH. WHAT IS IT YOU DON'T WANT ME TO SEE UP THERE

OKAY YOU GOT MY ATTENTION HECK, YOU HAD IT BEFORE I EVEN CLIMBED ABOARD
IS ONE OF YOU NAMED "KATINA"?
'CAUSE I WAS PICKING UP YOUR LIFE STORY OUT THERE LIKE IT WAS THE MOVIE OF THE WEEK!
I'M NOT SURE, BUT I'M GUESSING THE SAME GIFT THAT LETS ME SEE YOU IS ALSO DOING THE TRANSLATING
BACK OFF!
I CAN'T HEAR MYSELF THINK WHEN YOU ALL START UP LIKE THAT!

THERE--!
LIKE ORANGE FLARE IN DISTANCE
OUT ACROSS ICE PACK...
I WAS RIGHT SHE JOURNEYS TO ADSKIJ
"..BUT SHE ENCOUNTERS SOMETHING UNEXPECTED ALONG WAY.."
OKAY FOR STARTERS, I THINK YOU FOLKS'VE BEEN DEAD FOR A LONG TIME
YEARS
ORDINARILY, YOU'D ALL HAVE MOVED ON A FEW MINUTES AFTER YOU CROAKED, BUT SOMETHING IS KEEPING YOU HERE
I'VE BEEN TOLD THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT AT A FACTORY IN A PLACE CALLED ADSKIJ THEY WERE TRYING TO MAKE SOME SORTA GHOST-BOMBS.
AND NOW, IT'S LIKE A KIND OF SUPERNATURAL FALLOUT KEEPS GHOSTS LINGERING IN RODINA, LIKE FLIES TRAPPED IN AMBER...
WHO WERE YOU PEOPLE ANYWAY?

"THEY KNEW THEY WERE TAKING A CHANCE, BUT SOME YEARS THE NORTHERN SHIPPING LANES STAY *OPEN* A FEW WEEKS *LONGER* THAN OTHERS
"THIS WAS *NOT* ONE OF THOSE YEARS
"WHEN THE CAPTAIN RADIOED FOR HELP, THE *CHEKA* WHO ANSWERED HIS CALL WERE AFRAID THEY'D GET IN TROUBLE FOR LOSING A SHIP
"SO THEY OFFICIALLY DECLARED THE SHIP *STOLEN* AND REFUSED TO ANSWER ANY FURTHER DISTRESS CALLS OR MOUNT A SEARCH
"AND SO WE *WAITED*, SLOWLY FREEZING AND STARVING, THE CREW ALONG WITH US
"FIVE DAYS AFTER THE SHIP'S *FOOD* RAN OUT, THE CAPTAIN DECIDED THAT WE HAD NO CHOICE EXCEPT TO BEGIN CONSUMING OUR OWN DEAD
"GOD FORGIVE ME, BUT BY THAT TIME, AND WITH ENOUGH SALT AND PEPPER IT ACTUALLY TASTED *GOOD*
"A WEEK INTO THIS, ONE OF THE PRISONERS DISCOVERED THAT THE CREW HAD *KEPT* THE REAL FOOD TO *THEMSELVES*

BUT WHY?!
NO! I MEAN, WHY ALL OF IT!
WHY ROUND UP YOUR OWN PEOPLE LIKE THIS? WHAT DID YOU EVER DO TO DESERVE SUCH TREATMENT?!
WELL, IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT VIKTOR SUVOROV, YOU'D BETTER START USIN' THE PAST TENSE HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR A WHILE NOW
HIS OWN PEOPLE GAVE HIM THE FIRING SQUAD!
WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE?
SAME AS YOU. I FELT HER SPOOK-POWER FLARIN', AND HOMED IN ON IT, DOUBLE-TIME

HE'S GONE NOW, AND THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS WHAT A MONUMENTAL LOWLIFE VIKTOR SUVOROV WAS!
DID YOU INFORM TENEBRION OF GIRL'S LOCATION?
NOPE. FIGURED YOU ALREADY HAD.
WHY DIDN'T YOU, BY THE WAY?
I AM NOT ANSWERING TO YOU, NEW-GUY! LEARN YOUR PLACE!
SOMETIMES, EVEN, I AM THINKING YOU DO NOT TRULY SERVE PERDITION!
THEN YOU'RE NOT HALF AS DUMB AS YOU SOUND!
CHTO?
LET'S SAY HELLO TO OUR FAVORITE RUNAWAY COLLEGE-GIRL...
AHHHH--
HIYA, CASSIE. LONG WAY FROM HOME, AIN'T IT?

IF YOU VULTURES HAVE COME FOR THESE SOULS, I WON'T LET YOU TAKE THEM!
SETTLE DOWN, ANGEL-FOOD. THIS AIN'T A COLLECTION RUN. I JUST CAME TO WARN YOU AGAIN...
=UNH= WHAT ARE YOU DOING? =URK=
I KNOW YOU... YOU'RE THE SAME DARK SPIRIT THAT HELPED ME AGAINST THE REAPER-GHOST.
UNGRATEFUL... BACKSTABBING... VNEBRACHNYJ! YOU ARE GIVEN SECOND CHANCE BY ADVERSARY, AND THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY HIM?
CORRECT, DEAR. I ALSO WARNED YOU THE ADVERSARY SET TANNER ON YOUR TRAIL.
YOU WHAT?!
SORRY, PAL, BUT I'D ALREADY PLEDGED MY LOYALTY BEFORE I MET YOUR BOSS!
PLEDGED TO WHOM?
TO HER, OF COURSE.

WHAT?!
YOU KNOW THESE AREN'T OUR REAL FACES, CASSIE. YOU HAVE IT IN YOU TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH BEHIND A LIE.
DO IT NOW! LET THE TRUTH BE REVEALED!
NO, WAIT--!
BERKELY...?!
THE ONE AND ONLY "RAILSPLITTER"... IN THE FLESH, SO TO SPEAK.
YOU WORK FOR THEM NOW?!
LOOK! IT IS HIM!!!
THE SCUM WHO PUT US HERE!
SUVOROV!!

NYET!
NOT LIKE
THIS!!